

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Johnstone G. Patrick:

THE TRIUMPH OF TRUST

Page **5**

Allen R. Huband **8** A Stone's Throw Removed

Bernard H. Hemmeter **10** The Pre-eminent Christ

Charles R. Woodson **12** The Cross and Life Eternal

Herbert Beecher Hudnut **15** Reason for Rejoicing

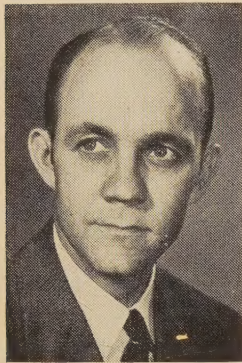
Clarence Seidenspinner **29** Come Let Us Worship

For Other Features **31** Table of Contents

J. CLAUDE EVANS **2** AN EASTER MESSAGE

THE DEEPER MEANING

FOR many, Easter means simply immortality. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we shall also rise again. This belief has become so much a part of the traditional faith of Christians that often they are surprised to learn that many people, past and present, believe in immortality with no reference to the resurrection.



The early Egyptians believed in a shadowy sort of immortality, where the dead lived inside their tombs. Later they came to believe in a real resurrection by day, when the dead lived again in the sunlight, but at night resumed their places in the tombs. Later still, the Egyptians generally believed in an

enduring immortality where the dead lived with the gods and, like Osiris, daily made the round of earth with them.

Hindus too believe in a kind of immortality through karma and the transmigration of souls. In their view, one's moral stature in this life would determine what form the next life took. Hence all life—animal, insect or human—is sacred for the orthodox Hindu. You dare not kill a cow lest it be your kinsman dead these many years. The Buddhists also, while silent on individual immortality, still believe in the heaven of nirvana, where the individual soul experiences the extinction of earthly passion and evil and is absorbed into the Absolute.

Or take the Hebrews. While they held no doctrine of immortality in the early history of Israel, gradually they came to accept the belief in the fatherhood of God which made some kind of faith in immortality and the future life possible. Late in the Old Testament, there appear passages indicating that some Hebrews accepted this belief, and in Jesus' day the Pharisees had come to be well known as believers in immortality.

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Aside from these religious considerations leading to belief in immortality, many philosophers have proclaimed their faith in life beyond death with no reference to the resurrection of Jesus. Plato certainly believed in the future life, and Socrates probably did too. And on occasion a Christian scientist-philosopher-theologian could argue for immortality with no reference to religious presuppositions. Listen to Pascal:

Atheists: What right have they to say that one cannot rise from the dead? Which is the more difficult, to be born, or to rise again; that which has never been, be, or that which has been, be again? Is it more difficult to come into being than to return to being? Custom makes the one seem easy, the absence of custom makes the other seem impossible: a popular method of judging. (*Pensées*)

Christians have taken the next step and have insisted that because Jesus lives, we also shall live again. While this is true, and a proper and logical step in the growth of faith, it is not all that is true or all that needs to be said. The resurrection means infinitely more than mere personal immortality.

Explains the Bible

The resurrection fundamentally is the sure witness of God to man of the certain victory of the Kingdom of God over all the forces of evil. The resurrection means that righteousness and simple goodness are more powerful than unrighteousness and will some day rise triumphant over the worst evil; that love is stronger than hate, and some day will reign supreme; that truth is closer to reality than half-truths or outright lies, and one day will triumph over all error; that the values of the spirit are superior to the values of the flesh, and Easter is a sure promise of the transfiguration of the physical that is to come.

How great then Easter becomes! It is not a device of human superstition to quiet man's selfish fears of death. Rather, Easter is the high point of history witnessing to the sure victory of the Kingdom of God. If this be true, then certain insights result.

The resurrection explains and completes the message of the Bible, and not the other way around. The resurrection is not true because it is in the Bible; the essential message of the Bible is true because of the resurrection! It is the seal of God upon the truth of the gospel.

Read the Old Testament and see traced through

*A timely and thought provoking article
by one of the South's ablest
younger preachers*

OF THE RESURRECTION

its secular history the longing for a fulfillment that never comes. The Hebrews are chosen by God in covenant with Abraham, but through Joseph soon fall into bondage to the Egyptians. Through Moses they are led out of slavery to the land of promise. From herdsmen they develop into farmers, from tribes into a nation with the desire for a king, only to have the new nation rent with civil war and falling into new bondages to Assyria and Babylon. Later, this longing for nationhood struggled to a brief and tenuous achievement through the Maccabees, only to be shattered forever by Rome. To this day this dream of the Hebrews is unfulfilled, except as Zionist Israel is a symbol of its continuing power.

Resurrection Is Fulfillment

Or examine the parallel moral and spiritual history of the Hebrews. The Law and the basis of simple morality came from Moses; justice and the basis for social morality with Amos; love and the basis for spiritual morality with Hosea; the basis of moral redemption through sacrificial service with Isaiah; the worth of the individual and his responsibility for his own sins with Ezekiel; the holiness of true worship and the basis of spiritual growth with Jeremiah; the hope of a heavenly Kingdom with Enoch. But it was never fulfilled, despite the grandeur of the hope.

Not ever fulfilled? Not until the resurrection. Christians rightly say that the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, is fulfilled in the New Testament, the New Covenant. But this is true only if the resurrection is true. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then the best thing that ever came to the world in its spiritual and secular history—namely Jesus Christ, whose perfect love fulfilled the demands of the law, whose sinless goodness fulfilled the highest claims of morality, whose self-chosen suffering fulfilled the demands of servanthood, whose commitment to God's will was so complete that the will was done in perfection through the cross to the victory of the resurrection—if this Jesus died and did not rise triumphant from the grave, then God is not a God of love, but a God of unthinkable evil.

But it is not so. There is a God of love whose will it is that not one should die, but that all who desire it should be saved through his forgiving grace. The seal of this is the victory of the resurrection of Christ. This is the good news of the gospel. This is why Sunday is the Christian day of

worship instead of the Saturday "Sabbath"; it is the Lord's Day, when he rose from the dead. All the message of the Bible, Old and New, finds its fulfillment here.

Problem of Miracles

In the second place, the resurrection explains and completes the miraculous in the Bible and in times since the Bible was written. The problem of miracles has always been a difficult one for seekers after truth, and especially so in our day when science has become almost a god. For the extreme skeptic, let it be said that you can disbelieve in all the miracles save the resurrection, and still see the truth in Christianity. But disbelieve the resurrection and the Christian answer to man's tragic existence collapses. Actually, says Johann Weiss, there is more evidence for the resurrection than there is for the birth of Christ or even his death. And the resurrection gives meaning to his life and his death and illuminates the meaning of miracle in all of human existence.

The resurrection is the measure of God's will, and is therefore the measure of what man can believe in terms of miracle. It makes some miracles understandable; it rules others out as superstitions or unnecessary to faith. When God's clear will is revealed in the resurrection as love creating a Kingdom against all the forces of finitude and freedom and man-made evil, it is the supreme miracle. But his will is everywhere doing the same thing through men and nations who will have it so. Miracles still happen when love conquers the will.

Using this as a measure, one can for example determine whether one considers the flood story of the Old Testament or the Red sea escape of the Israelites to Canaan myth or essentially true history. The flood would seem to be myth, not literal history, but a story with deep truths of figure and imagination. The Red sea escape, whatever the cause of the physical manifestation of the divided waters, fits into the pattern of God's will covenanting with his chosen people and beginning the pattern of his revelation of himself to man.

Meaning of the Church

In the third place, the resurrection explains and completes the meaning of the church. How could such a world-encompassing organization be founded by accident? Hundreds of man-made organizations, good while they fulfilled certain hu-

man needs of the moment, have lived and died and been forgotten—often not quite soon enough. Even nations and cultures have come and gone. But not the church. The church remains, constantly renewing itself from a faith not made with hands, anchored in the cosmic miracle of the resurrection. Without the resurrection, the church would long since have failed for lack of a cosmic and eternal reference. But because He lives, the church lives and will live till consummated in the Kingdom.

Therefore the significance of the resurrection is more than just the fact that the man named Jesus rose from the dead, important as that is. That omits the continuing presence of the Risen Christ in the church, which has become his body. As John Knox has expressed it in his lectures: "The significance of the resurrection is not that Christ, who was, later was remembered as one who rose from the dead; but the significance of the resurrection is that the Christ who was, now *is*, and can be experienced in his church."

You can experience him? How? In the fellowship of worship; for we bow today because he is with us and in us, seeking to make himself known as Lord and Christ of us all. In the fellowship of play; for it is in gay spontaneity that we are most ourselves and most open to the leading of his spirit. In the fellowship of work; for work is our calling and our discipline whereby we are made members of the Kingdom of those who do his will. In the fellowship of beauty; for beauty is the reflection of his Spirit. In the fellowship of service; for simple love done in life is the messenger of the divine, the outer Christ witnessing to the Christ within. In the fellowship of the common meal; for here our essential oneness—incarnate beings, kin to clay and to spirit as well—is revealed. In the fellowship of surrender; for here is wisdom and knowledge and power and the hint of glory made real within us.

In the fourth place, the resurrection explains and completes our own desire for immortality,

though as we have seen this is not the only or the primary meaning of his triumph over the grave.

But do not take this too lightly. If it took perfect goodness, the sinless life and sacrificial service of one wholly surrendered to the will of God to produce the first resurrection, what will it take for us? Surely the gay and superficial form of Christianity so prevalent today, more surrendered to the whims of the world than to the will of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not worthy of the resurrection promise. It is only inasmuch as we have fellowship with him through his life of simple love and devotion to the will of the Father that we too have the guarantee of immortality in the Kingdom.

In this modern day of the scientific mind, preachers are often asked: What do you believe about hell? Or, what do you think heaven is? Traditionally, Christians have thought of hell as being some sort of fiery place, and heaven as some sort of place of splendor with streets of gold and gates of pearl. But these are figurative terms surely. If hell were all flame, then mortal man would soon burn away into nothingness. And if this is all hell is, many a neurotic and tormented human would yearn for it now, desiring nothing more than nothingness forever. So with a heaven of gold and pearl. If that were heaven, heaven would be physical and Fort Knox would be its location.

No, heaven and hell are still mysteries, only hinted at in the religious experiences of life. But if our freedom, however limited, is real, and we are the kind of creatures made in the image of God the Bible says we are, then this much is certain: there is a heaven of living by God's will revealed in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and there is a hell of rebellion against his will. And it is the resurrection that is witness to the fact that those who surrender to this will are assured of a continuance of life with him in eternity, beyond history, in a Kingdom not made with hands, high and lifted up.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers
are Preaching About

DONALD SIMMS, JR., Community Methodist, Fort Hancock, Texas. "The Highway of the High Way." Mark 8:34—*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.*

WILLIAM T. TURNBULL, United Presbyterian, Latrobe, Pa. "Remember Hiroshima!" Isaiah 5:20—*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

EARL E. G. LINDEN, Edgewood Congregational, Cranston, R. I. "Marching to the Beat of a Distant Drummer." Isaiah 33:13—*Hear, ye that are far off.*

LYLE OSBORNE BRISTOL, Baptist Church of the Redeemer, Brooklyn, N. Y. "When a Minister Prays." Col. 1:9-12—*We do not cease to pray for you . . . that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will . . . that ye might walk worthy of the Lord . . . unto all patience and long suffering . . . giving thanks unto the Father.*

HOWARD W. KING, Christian, Philadelphia, Pa. "Discipleship That Counts." John 8:31—*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*

ARCHIE E. ACEY, Monumental Methodist, Portsmouth, Va. "Unknown Needs." Matt. 19:18—*What lack I?*

(Continued on page 9)

The Triumph of Trust

By Johnstone G. Patrick

I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Isaiah 12:2.

OF James Guthrie, the Covenanting minister of Stirling, is told a tale that in Scotland never fails to quicken the pulse and bring the blood leaping to the heart. On the morning of his execution the sun shone brightly into his cell. His servant, James Cowie, was with him. Wakening, Cowie remembered that this would be the last morning his dear master and he would be together. His weeping roused the minister. "Come, come," said the latter, "no more of this. This is the day God made"—pointing to the dancing sunbeams—"this is the day God made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it."

Thus it is and ever should be with the trusting sons and daughters of God. Every day is a good day, for it is God's day of golden opportunity. Whatever befalls those who love him is best for them. His will is love. His service is perfect freedom. His purpose is wise and kind, and as our faith in him grows firmer and our trust more radiantly sure, our souls breathe a calm no circumstance can mar.

The Trusting Heart

—It is a good thing, in these days of ruined dreams and perished hopes, to get back to such a simple creed of faith as this: "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

Such a fine, familiar text covers everything essential; it expresses the sum and substance of religion and the perennial secret of right living. To bring us to the attitude and temper of trust in God is the aim of the activity of God and the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Son of Man lived and taught, suffered and died, to make this trust in God possible; to free men from the meshes of menacing circumstances, invisible terrors and selfish passions; to quicken and nourish in men confidence toward God, the Father and Friend of all.

The secret of glad, victorious living on your part and mine resides in the trusting heart. What

The first photograph of a contributor from overseas to appear on the cover of The Pulpit is that of JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK, the preacher of this sermon. He is the minister of Spurgeon Memorial Church, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, Channel Islands and an oldtime friend and contributor to this journal.

trumpet tones of triumph are blown to us from the poet's words—

I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails:
I shall believe the Hand that never fails,
From seeming evil worketh good for me.
And though I weep because those sails are tattered,
Still will I cry, while my best hopes are shattered,
I trust in Thee.

In effect he says: "I can be made poor. I can be defeated in my plans. I can lose my nearest and dearest. I can be stretched upon a cross of pain. I can be humbled. I can be buffeted by all the tides of chance and circumstances. But, O God, I cannot be overwhelmed! I have always left within me an inner life of strength and peace. I trust in Thee."

God's Nature Revealed

Uncountable are the questions concerning life, death, God and evil that we cannot answer. They are mysteries which the most scholarly minds can never penetrate. Yet all that matters little if only we can know enough to enable us to have confidence in the unceasing goodness and kindness of God; enough to nourish within us the calm consciousness that we are in his hands and all is well; enough for the perception and performance of duty; enough for the persistent exercise of faith, hope and charity; enough to inspire strength and peace.

Warren Seabury, an American missionary in China, wrote: "I do not know what is before me, but I am building my nest in the greatness of God." That is the language and experience of the tranquil, trusting heart. It is just this measure of confidence in the goodness and greatness of God which you and I need for all practical purposes of living.

Of course, there must be knowledge before there can be trust; some foundation in knowledge for the faith which goes beyond knowledge. "The God with whom we have to do" is not a despot. He gives us grounds and reasons for trust before he sets out to solicit it.

In the world of nature and man, in the best and noblest thoughts of our own minds, in the worthiest affections of our own hearts, in the varied experiences of our own lives, in the witness of saintly souls, in the life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—God has revealed enough of his loving nature and all-wise will to quicken and sustain strong trust in us for him, when even the whole earth around us seems to crumble.

Moreover, in all the range of Holy Writ we do not find a deeper sense of the mystery of life than in the book of Isaiah, yet it is pervaded with a pure and lofty trust in an all-knowing and almighty God. From the beginning to the end it inculcates and justifies constant, complete confidence in that One who "sits upon the circle of the earth." It is full of tender intimations and glorious glimpses of that higher vision and understanding of life, of those deeper and larger spiritual interpretations, "which came by Jesus Christ." The history of much that is called Christianity is often the history of distrust and fear, but when we return to the sublime simplicity found in Isaiah we return to confidence and courage, tranquillity and joy. The authentic voice of our holy religion is the voice of the prophet of faith, saying, "I will trust, and not be afraid."

Defeats Often Victories

We cannot, of course, hide from ourselves and our children the dark and seamy side of human life, and furthermore, we do not want or wish for a faith which does not fully recognize it; but when we study the drift and trend of things, God becomes his own interpreter. "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him," and he will make all things plain. The end will ultimately explain and vindicate both the length and the severity of the process. God's world, when finished, will be far better than we, in our wildest dreams, have pictured it might and ought to be. It may be, and often is, difficult to understand trials and struggles when we are in the midst of them; but by slow degrees and stages the knowledge dawns upon every thoughtful, trustful believer that life is interwoven throughout with the kindly purposes and providences of God. The experiences of life may be hard and harrowing, inscrutable and irreconcilable, but we grow by what seems to thwart us. Defeats are sometimes our best victories in disguise, and adversities and griefs the fertile soil in which we find the finest sort of faith growing.

Beset by Life

The story is told of a baron who, tired of the gay, idle life of the court, withdrew from it. He built himself a fort on a rugged rock, beneath which rolled the Rhine. He hung wires from one wing of the fort to another, making an aeolian harp on which the winds might play to solace his solitude. Many days and nights passed by, winds had come and gone, yet never had there been music from that huge harp, and the baron interpreted the silence as the sign of God's unremoved displeasure. One evening, however, the sky was torn with wild, hurrying clouds, and as night fell a storm shook the very earth. The baron walked nervously through his rooms in loneliness and disquiet. At length he went out into the night, but stopped short on the threshold. He listened, and behold! the wild air around was full of music. His harp was singing with joy and passion above the raucous roarings of the storm. Then the baron *knew*. Those wires, too thick and heavy to give out music at the call

of common days and ordinary winds, had found their voice in a night of stress and storm. It needed the uttermost assault of nature to awaken the slumbering song.

So may it be with souls beset by life. All things are for our sakes—and we need them all. Difficulty, defeat, disease, death, pain, problems, persecution, come in order that we may discover the depths and secrets of our own being and of divine grace and goodness. "Strain," the late Dr. John Hutton reminded us, "is a word which means stress; but likewise means song." The soul that is sure of God and trusts him sees through and accepts the whole scheme of pain and trial. The more such a faith is tried, the deeper will it hide itself in God.

Unhappy is the human who has lost the quiet strength of Christian faith. One poet expresses that unhappiness thus:

She set a rose to blossom in her hair,
The day faith died.
"Now glad," she said, "and free to go,
And life is wide."
But through long nights she stared into the dark
And knew she lied.

And another poet, dealing with the same pathetic problem, leaves us with a query:

The lark soared up in the sky,
The toad sat still in his hole:
O would that I knew which of the two
Were the truer type of my soul.

Meaning of Faith

It appears, however, that some regard their trust in God as a talisman which renders them exempt from the blows and bludgeonings of life, or at least should do so were God just and faithful to his bargain. This attitude, though not always exactly formulated or bluntly stated, is not unusual. It is, of course, utterly unreasonable. Why should illness, reverses and losses be a danger to faith, be destructive of faith? What is there in our faith that guarantees that we who believe will lead a charmed life and be spared the ills and trouble and griefs that are the lot in life all humans are heir to? Is there anything to justify the seeming wild and widespread notion that, if one believes in God, one is sure of a placid, painless, prosperous life?

Where are the promises, the explicit and unconditional pledges, of perfect felicity on earth for the friends of God? There is certainly no foundation for this idea in the record of our Lord's life and teachings. Trust in God, love of God, a life of spiritual devotion—these bring God's grace and help "in time of need." They do not purchase immunity from sickness, difficulties, sorrows. Indeed, our Lord has stated quite succinctly somewhere that those who are nearest to him will be severely tested, will have to carry an extraordinary burden of distress, will know far fewer natural rewards and consolations than those who follow him—like Peter—afar off, or not at all. "In the world," he says, "you will have tribulation . . ."

To live by faith means to cultivate and nourish faith consciously and carefully, to strengthen and deepen and expand it, to make it pre-eminent in and determinative of our lives, to see everything through it, to judge everything by it, to send it plunging to the depths and soaring to the heights of our being, to cause it to color and sweeten and shape our judgments and our values, to make it the air we breathe and the atmosphere in which we move and the world in which we live, to have its accents upon our thoughts and our words, to set its seal upon our choices and our actions. It is only when we have done all this that we may say that we treasure our trust, that we prize our faith, that it means to us what God intended it should mean.

Of such a faith James Russell Lowell—shrewd seer that he was—has written most convincingly. In his essay on Abraham Lincoln, appearing in *My Study Window*, he says: "The only faith that wears well and holds its color in all weathers is that which is woven of convictions and set with the sharp mordant of experience." And it was the much neglected American poetess, Elizabeth Oakes Smith, who said much the same in a sonnet:

Faith is the subtle chain
Which binds us to the infinite; the voice
Of a deep life within, that will remain
Until we crowd it thence.

The words in our text, "I will trust and not be afraid," describe what ought to be our personal attitude to God in all our immediate relations to him. God ought not to be the object of any base or superstitious fear; he is the only real refuge from all such fear. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." To see God as he is revealed in Jesus is to trust him gladly and to be at peace with him. We are much that we ought not to be, and far too little what we ought to be. We need no arguments to convince us of our exceeding great sinfulness. We have inward evidence of transgression and failure, but it is only the heart without faith that wears itself out in regrets and fears.

We who believe in the eternal love revealed in the character and cross of our Redeemer need not have tormenting memories and fearful forebodings. The central truth of Christianity is the everlasting helpfulness of God. This is the message of Jesus to mankind, this is the great throbbing heart of his gospel—there is mercy for all, love for all, hope for all, and help for all, in God.

It is the Savior of the world, our Savior, who can inspire us with triumphant trust in God. In Christ he is our Protector and Deliverer. His nature and will are wholly satisfying grounds of human trust. Let us, then, say sincerely, or in the words of Scripture "with all our heart," "I will trust, and not be afraid."

LITTLE LINDA'S FRIENDS

A Sermon for Children by C. W. Vandenberg

ONE bright afternoon last August, four-year-old Linda Pietrafesa, of Massapequa, Long Island, enjoyed a free box seat at the Brooklyn Dodgers' baseball park. She was the honored guest of the club. Before the game she visited the dug-out where the players sat and had fun talking with them. She also had her picture taken with five of them—Jackie Robinson, Gil Hodges, Don Newcombe, Rex Barney and Ralph Branca. Do you wish to know why?

Well, about a year ago Linda was a very sick girl. She had some blood disease for which the doctors used one of those queer names so hard for most of us to remember. And they said that unless she received blood from other people, she would die. Among the many kind friends who gave Linda some of their blood and helped save her life were these five players. Let's name them again. They were Jackie Robinson, Gil Hodges, Don Newcombe, Rex Barney and Ralph Branca.

Now Linda, as her last name shows, is an Italian. And not one of these men who gave her blood is Italian. That didn't seem to matter. Al-

though they were all from different national backgrounds, their blood mingled well with Linda's and saved her life.

And there's another interesting thing. I suppose many of you have already noticed it. Two of these players are Negroes. Jackie Robinson, for one; most of you know that. He is known all over the world as one of the finest athletes and Christian gentlemen. The other Negro is Don Newcombe. And their blood worked well, too; just as well as the blood of the others. That their skin was black while Linda's was white made no difference at all. Their blood was the same, as human blood is the same the world over. That's what the Bible means when it says (Acts 19:26), "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." And I am sure Jesus wants us to remember that when we pray as he taught us to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven . . ."

Someone asked a violin-maker where he got his wood for the best violins, and he answered, "From the trees above timberline." The greatest music doesn't come from violins made of soft wood grown in a protected valley, but from violins made of wood that has fought the storms.—Virgil A. Kraft, Methodist Chaplain at the University of Chicago.

C. W. VANDENBERGH is pastor of First Baptist, Cortland, New York. He is a poet as well as a preacher.



By Allen R. Huband

A Stone's Throw Removed

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. Matthew 26:38.

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast. Luke 22:41.

HAVE you ever been struck by the seeming incongruity of two verses that occur very close together in the sixth chapter of Galatians—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," and "Every man must bear his own burden"? How can we reconcile these two apparently conflicting injunctions? If I bear my own burden, how can others bear it for me? And if I attempt to bear the burden of another, and so fulfill Christ's law, am I not making it impossible for that man to bear his own?

I wonder if the answer is not to be found in the story of Gethsemane, and particularly in the two verses of our text.

The last bitter test was at hand. As early as the temptation in the wilderness, the dark shadow of the cross had lain athwart Jesus' path. As the enmity against him gathered strength, he had warned his disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be killed. In the last intimate moments around the table in the upper room, he had spoken of his death and had linked his passion with the love of God and the redemption of man: "When ye have seen me, ye have seen the Father." "This is my body, which is broken for you."

Now he must go out, and in the garden, bring himself to an acceptance of the tragedy that was about to unfold, so that it should be, not a potion that was thrust down his throat, but a cup that he should take from the Father's hand—yes, even reach out for—and willingly drink. They descend from the upper room, but when they come to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus takes the three who have been closest to him and advances toward the spot of his supreme agony.

I

The first thing to note is that Jesus wanted the presence and support of his friends. "Tarry ye

here, and watch with me." Earthly friends can go a long way with us into the garden of sorrow, and it is a tremendous lift to know in a time of trouble that understanding hearts are watching and praying. It is one of the priceless privileges of friendship to be thus "standing by." Oscar Wilde used to say that if a friend of his gave a party and did not invite him, he would not mind a bit. But if that friend had a sorrow and did not permit him to share it, if the doors of the house of mourning were shut against him, he would feel it as a most poignant humiliation. The greatest compliment that a friend can pay you is to "include you in" on his sorrow, anxiety or pain.

Count it as an honor when men turn to you in trouble; and if you would bear the name of friend, be ready to mingle your tears with others.' Be alert for signals of distress. Be sympathetic. Cultivate an understanding heart.

There are lonely people carrying burdens that you can help to bear. Dr. William Stidger, of radio fame, tells about going into a grocery store one day during the war. One of the clerks, a middle-aged man, was particularly solicitous. He followed Dr. Stidger around, seemed to be trying to make conversation, and insisted on carrying the groceries out to the car.

"What is it?" asked Dr. Stidger. "I think you want to tell me something."

"Yes," said the man, "my boy is at Okinawa. He has been lonely, and so have we—his mother and I. This morning we received this message: 'The War Department regrets to inform you that your son, Corporal David Jones, has been dangerously wounded.'"

Standing there on the sidewalk, beside the open door of his car, Dr. Stidger realized that there are countless persons in this old world who are carrying loads that others might share. So give your sympathy without stopping to ask whether it is worth while to do so. It is too sacred a thing for any of us to tell what it is worth. God, from whom it comes, sends it through you to the man who stands in need. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

And you who are carrying cares—do not turn in upon yourselves. Let others share them with you. Let others help you to bear them. Do not think for a moment that you are imposing on friendship when you permit your friends to go with you into the garden of sorrow.

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The other day I was in a home where there has been a lot of sickness and trouble. One of our church families had been a tower of strength. The good man of the house was actually embarrassed when he told me of all that had been done for him. And this is what I said to him: "Why, my dear man, a true friend is always looking for an opportunity to help in time of trouble. Friendship needs such opportunities if it is to be deep and strong. You are doing your friends a favor by letting them help you. They owe at least as much to you as you to them."

When the Garden of Gethsemane lies ahead, friends can go, want to go, and do go, a long way. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"—which is not only the law of love and service, but the law of our own spiritual growth.

II

But friends cannot go all the way. Jesus wanted his friends near him, and their "standing by" meant much. But he had to go on farther alone. As Luke puts it: "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast." There is always that stone's-throw distance between the heart in its bitterness and pain, and the nearest and dearest friend. There is an inner sanctuary of sorrow where even the wisest and most understanding cannot, and will not try, to come. When loving friends have done their best—have sat with us in silence; have pressed our hand and talked it through; have watched in prayer and mingled their tears with ours—the battle has still to be fought out in that lonely place, a stone's throw removed.

A father and mother saw their daughter happily married, and rejoiced with her in the birth of two beautiful children. But when the young husband was lost over Germany, they felt strangely helpless. "We did what we could, but we knew that in the last analysis she had to face her sorrow and make her adjustments alone. We could only watch and wait and pray."

Suffering and conflict and temptation are always an individual thing, and therefore a lonely experience that cannot be completely shared. Jesus had to fight his battle in the garden alone. As the old hymn puts it: "He suffered, bled, and died, alone."

Everyone who has lost a son, who faces an illness that cripples or can only end in death; everyone who must meet circumstances that shatter life's dearest plans, is in that place "a stone's throw removed." In this sense "every man must bear his own burden."

III

But there is One who can, and does, go all the way. Jesus went on, and he was alone as far as earthly comradeship was concerned. But who would affirm that in the hour of his extremity he was really alone?

There are two things about famous paintings of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane that have often struck me. One is the angel hovering in the

background. An illustrious preacher was once asked what biblical character he would most have liked to be. He answered, "The angel that strengthened Jesus in Gethsemane." Perhaps we would feel like saying to him, as the Master once said to the mother of James and John: "Ye know not what ye ask." For the inclusion of that angel was the artist's way of saying, "God himself was there."

The other point about the paintings is the great rock upon which Jesus is leaning. It is symbolic. The psalmist says, "When my heart is overwhelmed, thou wilt lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Jesus is here leaning on the Rock of Ages. He was not alone!

The biographer of Garibaldi tells how one night a soldier in the great liberator's army was brooding outside his tent in the moonlight. His earlier enthusiasm had faded. He was thinking of his wife and children at home. He was planning how he might desert. The great commander himself came by. In a glance he took in the situation. He seemed to read the thoughts that were doing battle in the soldier's mind. He put his hand on the man's shoulder and spoke just one word—"Courage."

My friends, in the hour of your extremity, when you feel like deserting your post and abandoning your faith, a Greater than Garibaldi is at your side, and his one word is—"Courage."

Jesus was never utterly forsaken. For a few terrible moments on the cross he thought he was. "My God, my God," he cried, "why hast thou forsaken me?" Don't be surprised, therefore, if you sometimes feel the same way. But remember that it was only a few minutes later that God's presence was so infinitely real to him that he lifted his eyes to heaven, and in perfect confidence and peace whispered, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Yes, God goes all the way.—

And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch above his own.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." "Every man must bear his own burden." But now we must add a third text: "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

Titles and Texts

(Continued from page 4)

WILLIAM H. KETTLITZ, First Presbyterian, Independence, Iowa. "How Is Your Marriage Working Out?" Matt. 19:5—*And the two shall become one.*

R. K. GROSE, Camp Point, Ill. "Proposing an A Bomb." Luke 9:54—*Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?*

D. W. CHARLTON, Methodist, Goldsboro, N. C. "The Portrait of a Preacher." Isaiah 61:1 ff (Moffatt)—*The Lord Eternal, he inspires me, for the Eternal has consecrated me, and sent me with good news for wretched men, to heal the broken-hearted, to tell prisoners they are free. . . .*

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The Pre-eminent Christ

By **Bernard H. Hemmeter**

...that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. Colossians 1:18.

WE have entered a difficult year—a year that calls for strong faith. Our President has reminded us that our best weapons are not tanks, guns and bombs, but faith in the brotherhood and dignity of man under God. The secretary of state

has called upon the citizens to have courageous faith in themselves. Others have called for faith in the righteousness of our cause. And still others, for faith in our resources and our atomic weapons.

We do not doubt but that most of those who are calling for faith will agree that fundamentally there must be faith in God. But following today's mode of thinking,

God so often is simply taken for granted or placed last in man's references. Many do not seem to know just where to bring God into the picture or what to do with him. For them he is the last resort. If we could only accustom ourselves to place God ahead of man and his world, making God the subject and man and the world the object of God's interest and concern.

Why Pre-eminent

Our day calls for a strong faith in God, specifically the God who was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. We cannot derive much comfort from a God who is merely conceived of as a principle or power, but we can from a God who is the Father. He becomes personal and intimate. This God is not merely the Father of men, who as his creatures are known as the children of God; he is in particular the Father of a Son, who was begotten of him from eternity. The Father sent this Son into the world as his image, that through him we might know God. He has come as the revelation of the Father and has declared that "he who has seen me has seen the Father." The Father has also sent his Spirit into the heart of man to enable man to know both the Father and the Son. It is this God—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—who gives us the strength we need for our day. Our text states that this God who is in Christ is to have pre-eminence in all things.

First, the justification for this pre-eminence. This God incarnate in Christ is the Creator of all things. "By him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." In these words the apostle impresses upon us that creation embraces far more than we can visualize. Beyond that which we observe it includes much that is invisible and heavenly. Even there God has created ranks and orders, authorities and subjects. A great part of creation is far superior to man, beyond man's comprehension, and yet it is not God. It too has been created by God through the activity of his Son, Jesus Christ. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

We lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help, knowing that it comes from him who made the hills, who made heaven and earth. This is the God who is in Christ and who claims pre-eminence, who at all times is to be the first object of our worship and of our faith.

Unifying Factor

This God-in-Christ is the unifying factor in the world. He is before all things and by him all things consist. All things of the created universe find their coherence in the Son. Ours is an orderly universe and all things hold together through him. He upholds all things by the word of his power. It is by Christ, the Son of God, that unity, law and order are maintained. In all humility we are aware of a confusion and a chaotic condition in our world, the part of creation which is closest to us, and we conclude that all is going to ruin. This is due to the fact that our faith grows dim when immediate troubles loom so large before us. Overwhelmed, we lose our vision of the entire creation. We need but look off to the heavens. There is no disorder there. The stars still move in their regular courses. Again we are reminded of the power of the eternal Christ. The farther Christ vanishes from our faith and thinking, the more confusion we find. If Christ were to be entirely withdrawn we would have chaos. With a strong faith in the Christ through whom all things consist we can remain

calm, even lift up our heads and find peace and joy. This sustaining God-in-Christ claims pre-eminence.

The Redeemer

This God-in-Christ is the Redeemer of the universe, "having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Here again we have reference to a mystery which often escapes us, namely, that the entire universe was affected by man's fall into sin. This earth has been cursed for man's sake. Paul refers to this in Romans 8:19-22, where he speaks of the creature's being "made subject to vanity" with the hope that it "also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." We know, he says, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The Apostle Peter, preaching at the temple, calls upon people to repent and be converted in order to be prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ, "whom the heavens must receive until the time of restitution of all things," and he points forward to the new heaven and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. The cross of Christ on which his blood was sacrificed is a force which eventually will restore the entire universe. This God-in-Christ shall have pre-eminence.

But above all this God-in-Christ is the Redeemer of man. He "has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." In the body of his flesh through death, he has presented us who had been alienated and enemies of God as "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable." This God-in-Christ is to have pre-eminence. This God-in-Christ, who is the Creator of all things, who is the unifying factor of all things, who is the Redeemer of the universe and, above all, the Redeemer of man, must be the prime object of our faith.

Pre-eminent in the Church

This pre-eminence of Christ is to be evident in his body, the church. "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have pre-eminence." All who have become a part of his body, who have accepted him as their Lord, who acknowledge him as their Head, must evidence his pre-eminence in their worship and in their obedience. This profound truth, that God-in-Christ must come first, is received only by Christian faith. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. St. Peter, who had been led to recognize Christ in his pre-eminence, expresses this: "It is true that God chose him to fulfill this part before the world was founded, but it was for your benefit that he was revealed in these last days—for you who found your faith in God

through Christ. And God raised him from the dead and gave him unimaginable splendor, so that all your faith and hope might be centered in God" (1 Pet. 1:20-21; Phillips' translation). Built on this foundation of the prophets and apostles, all who are gathered into his church must acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. This is a re-emphasis of truths declared by God's prophets long before God was manifest in Christ.

Isaiah impresses upon us the fact that the Child who is to be born, the Son who is to be given, is to be known as the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, that of his government there shall be no end. The prophet Micah, referring to the Babe of Bethlehem, declares that his going forth has been from everlasting to everlasting. The entire history of the church is an evidence of the pre-eminence of the Eternal Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, and who through the long history of war, strife and confusion has continued to build his church. This church then must proclaim him, declaring that he who is able to rescue from the powers of darkness, to establish us in the Kingdom of his beloved Son, that he, the first-born from the dead, the Lord of the resurrection, is able to lift his church out of the darkness in which it lives and set it upon a hill where it is able to point people to their God and thereby to revive their hope. Although the church is comprised of human beings, the church's life and existence is not in their hands. They do not determine its direction or purposes, but look to him who is the Head. They know that he will build his church and that the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it.

The Church Provides

As surely as our day requires strong faith, so surely the church is here to provide the same. When Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem to his disciples, he pictured conditions far worse than we are experiencing, at least among our own people. Fellow Christians elsewhere are facing similar conditions, experiencing martyrdom as never before. St. Luke in his twenty-first chapter speaks of wars and famines and pestilences, fearful sights, persecutions, betrayals by nearest kinsmen. But Christ's people were promised a refuge, which they found in the little mountain village of Pella. They were able to continue building his Kingdom.

Jesus then pointed to a time when conditions upon earth would be far worse, a time of distress of nations, with perplexity, when men's hearts would fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on earth, when even the powers of heaven would be shaken. But those who know the Christ should lift up their heads, knowing that their redemption is near at hand. They would see the Son of Man coming with power and great glory.

Hebrews 12 impresses us with the earnest reminder that this world will be shaken again and

again, and that in back of it all will be the hand of almighty God, who has a definite purpose in view—not merely to sift out the strong and the courageous for this world's tasks, but above all, the persevering and faithful for his heavenly Kingdom. Huge structures have been shaken from their foundations, mighty kingdoms have been destroyed. One thing remains firm and immovable. It is the Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom built by his word of grace, the Kingdom which is being drawn to the cross.

That Kingdom is evident in the church of the Eternal Christ. As the church makes Christ pre-eminent in her faith, her worship, her witnessing,

her life, she makes the greatest contributions which can be offered our troubled day. Her strong faith will be contagious. It will impress others and lead them to the source of its strength.

Fellow believers, give Christ pre-eminence. All hail the power of Jesus' name and crown him Lord of all. He who has never failed us is the hope of our dark world.

What great comfort and courage and strength we find as members of his body! Surely we should be ready to make great sacrifices in order that others who still live in darkness may be drawn unto him and through faith in him find the strength for living today.



By Charles R. Woodson

The Cross and Life Eternal

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Luke 23:46.

JESUS' death was the final proof of his devotion to God. The serenity which marked his life was then tested to the uttermost. Throughout the long hours that he hung upon the cross, Jesus pondered the treasured words of the Psalmist. Earlier, in a moment of perplexity, he had quoted from the twenty-second psalm; now, with the coming of death, he quoted from the thirty-first psalm: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." It was an expression of complete confidence in God.

The seventh word from the cross, like the first, was addressed to the Father. In all the intervening words Jesus gave testimony to his conviction that God was with him. In the third word Jesus committed his mother to the care of John. Now, as death drew near, he committed himself to the care of the Father. Confident that God would move his disciples to continue the work he had begun, he fell asleep peacefully in the arms of the Father.

The Empty Cross

The Easter message is based upon the empty cross. The great fact of Christianity is that it has at its center an ever present Savior. We think of Easter as a time of joy. When the women went to

the sepulcher "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," they found a Risen Lord. Their beloved friend, Jesus of Nazareth, had overcome death. The grave could not hold him. "And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word."

The followers of Jesus did not believe that he was living because they found an empty tomb; they knew him to be a risen Savior because they experienced him as a living reality. Mary Magdalene was comforted in the garden by the presence of Christ. The two men on the road to Emmaus were accompanied by a mysterious Presence which made their "hearts burn" within them. The scattered disciples, each experiencing the living Christ, returned to Jerusalem with renewed spirits, joyously proclaiming the gospel of the Risen Lord.

Throughout the stream of human history, a determined, convinced and enthusiastic band of followers have dedicated themselves to the living Christ. His name and influence, in Emerson's phrase, are "not so much written as plowed into the history of the world." Over eighteen hundred years after the crucifixion, we find George Mathe-son, the blind hymn writer, saying:

Son of Man, whenever I doubt of life, I think of thee. Nothing is so impossible as that thou shouldst be dead. I can imagine the hills to dissolve in vapor and the stars to melt in smoke, and the rivers to empty themselves in sheer exhaustion: but I feel no limit in thee. Thou never growest old to me. Last century is old, last year is an obsolete fashion, but thou art not obsolete. Thou art abreast of all the centuries. I have never come up with thee, modern as I am.

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Jesus allied himself with the eternal values of the universe. His resurrection reveals that love, justice and mercy contain transforming powers which make for life eternal. When an individual builds his life upon these eternal qualities, he is building toward immortality. Immortality is identification of the soul of man with the eternal values of the universe and the cosmic purpose of God.

Life that Cannot Die

If we wish to achieve life after death, we must live the life that cannot die. This can be accomplished only as we live in terms of the spirit. Paul writes: "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." The soul is at the center of life. Immortality is achieved when the individual soul is caught up and coincides with the eternal purpose of God. When this occurs, individual and eternal purpose become one. To believe in the life hereafter, we must believe in it as the life worth living now. As Lyman Abbott said, "To have faith in immortality we must practice immortality." We must so live today that we shall be worthy of the promise which is ours tomorrow.

The cross is God's channel of redemption within human life, and if we wish to live the life eternal we must seek it through the channel which God has opened to us. Jesus taught that the spiritual world is all about us, waiting to be inhabited. It is only as we build the life eternal into our lives now that we shall know the life hereafter. Eternal life is not something which comes only after death. It is in the world now, waiting to be lived. When we build into our lives the eternal qualities of love, justice and mercy, we become partakers of that experience called "life eternal."

The Easter message proclaims to the world that through the cross of Jesus we attain actual freedom from the bondage of sin and death. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said of Jesus: "God hath raised [him] up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Peter was saying that Jesus fulfilled so completely the will of God that he could not be holden by death. Jesus had built into his life the eternal qualities of God, and it was impossible to destroy the eternalness of his life by nailing his body to a cross.

The Highest Persists

The Gospels stress obedience to the will of God as necessary for man's moral good and as his only hope of salvation from sin. Jesus took upon himself the greatest burden of all, the destruction of sin and the reconciliation of man with the Father. His sacrificial death redeems us from those elements which continually seek to destroy our souls. He has revealed the channel by which we may bring our lives to fulfillment. He urges us to prepare for eternity by living now the life that cannot die.

The cross shows us it is not the lowest, but the

highest that persists. It is the things of the spirit that are abiding, and we as "mortals must put on immortality." Our bodies are the temples "of the Holy Spirit." The properties which constitute our physical make-up must die and return to the earth. This is not so in the realm of the spirit. The spirit has a timeless, limitless and eternal quality. There are no natural boundaries to love, truth, justice, mercy and beauty. Mortal man is incapable of reaching their consummation. When we are at our very best, far above us stands Christ. When the body dies, the spirit is beckoned on to new and greater possibilities. Belief in life eternal is an integral part of the Christian faith, and this belief is based upon the timelessness and limitlessness of the spirit.

If we were to make a study, we soon would discover that everybody believes there is something in life which lasts. The Stage Manager in Thornton Wilder's play, "Our Town," says:

I don't care what they say with their mouths—everybody knows that *something* is eternal. And it ain't houses and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even stars . . . everybody knows in their bones that *something* is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years and yet you'd be surprised how people are always losing hold of it. There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being.

Law of Life

The belief in immortality is as natural to man as are hunger, thirst and breath. It has persisted through all ages. It is a conviction which rests upon the very integrity of the universe. When we survey the long and costly course personality has traveled, the belief in immortality is inescapable. Something abiding must come of personality after death, or else the whole creative process of life is utterly purposeless. If life ended at the grave, this would be an irrational universe. It is impossible to believe that God, having brought forth his highest creation—human personality—through the travail of millions of years, will toss it aside as an unimportant experiment.

When we look at the world of nature we see that the law of nature is the law of life. Have you ever noticed how nature sets itself to the task of healing the wounds that occur as the result of storms? When lightning strikes a tree, nature repairs the damage by folding layers of living tissue over the scar. With the passage of time the wound is healed. The law of nature is not death, but life.

Jesus taught that this is our Father's world, and that God clothes the grass of the field and feeds the birds of the air. He also taught that personality is the most important thing in the world, worth far more than beautiful flowers, sparrows and sheep. God has made man "a little lower than the angels" and has "crowned him with glory and honor." Personality is the most valuable treasure in the universe. Through faith we are convinced that we can trust the words of Jesus concerning the home of a life beyond: "In my Father's house

are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Our innate belief in immortality is confirmed by the fact that Jesus' life did not end on Calvary. At first the disciples saw the cross as a stumbling-block—a terrible instrument of torture and death. But in the light of the resurrection experience they began to think differently. Instead of seeing the cross as an instrument of death, they saw it as a glorious symbol of hope and life eternal. Within a few years Paul wrote: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Conquering Death

The cross of Jesus reveals that we must conquer not only the fact of death, but also the fear of death. Too often we are afraid to look death in the face. This certainly is not because we are afraid of the pain, for the medical profession has given us the assurance that the dying suffer little physical pain. The spirit gently slips from the body. Just as birth is a tender experience between mother and child, so dying is a beautiful experience between God and man. Death is incidental to life eternal.

What we dread most in death is leaving behind the familiar for the unknown. The cross enables us to swallow up death in victory by turning our thoughts to the eternal. We are inhabitants not

only of a physical world, but also of a spiritual world which is invisible. Jesus revealed that the deepest forces in life are spiritual and invisible. It is the universal belief of mankind that Someone greater than ourselves dwells within us. The Christian is convinced that the true experiences of life are spiritual, a world within, unseen and unseeable. When we come to the great hour, we have faith that death will not sever the ties which bind our spirits to God and to the spiritual world within.

An anxious person once asked Bishop Berggrav of Norway for his view of death. The bishop replied with this story:

One day a peasant took his little son with him on a visit to a village some distance away. Along the road they came to a swift stream which was spanned by a rickety old bridge. But it was daylight and the father and son made the crossing without mishap.

It was dusk when the two started their homeward journey. The boy remembered the stream and the old bridge, and became frightened. How would they be able to cross that turbulent water in the dark? His father, noticing his anxiety, lifted him up and carried him in his arms. The fear subsided immediately, and before the boy knew it he was fast asleep on his father's shoulder. . . . As the sun of a new day streamed through the window of his bedroom, the boy awoke and discovered that he was safe at home.

Death is like that to the Christian. What we dread most, the river of death, we are able to cross unafraid, falling asleep in the arms of the Father. Soon we awake in the Father's house of many mansions, "where there is no night and no fear."

THE ARCHER AND THE TRUMPETER

A Sermon for Children by Helen Toner

THERE is an ancient Turkish fable that tells of an archer and a trumpeter who were traveling together in a lonely place. As they walked along the archer boasted of his skill as a warrior, and asked the trumpeter if he bore arms.

"No," replied the trumpeter, "I am not a fighter. I am a musician. I make music for those who go to battle."

"But I can hit a mark at a hundred paces," said the archer. As he spoke an eagle appeared hovering over the treetops. He drew out an arrow, fitted it on the bowstring and shot at the fierce bird, which fell to the ground.

"I am not afraid of any foe," the archer boasted, "for that bird might just as well have been a man. But *you*—you would be helpless if anyone attacked you."

As if drawn by his mention of the word, at that moment a band of robbers ran out of the under-

brush with drawn swords. At once the archer shot an arrow and felled the first of the men, but the rest soon overpowered and bound him.

"As for the trumpeter, he can do us no harm, for he has neither sword nor bow," cried the thieves. They took away his purse but left his hands free.

The trumpeter thanked them for giving him his freedom, then asked permission to blow a tune for them on his horn.

With their consent he blew loud and long. While the brigands lingered to hear the music, the King's Guards who had heard the trumpeter slipped up behind them, surrounded them and carried them off to prison.

When they unbound the boastful archer, he said humbly to the trumpeter: "Friend, I have learned today to appreciate your kind of strength!"

This fable highlights a truth which Jesus taught over and over again: that one does not need a swagger and a weapon to be a man of power. "Blessed are the meek," said he, "for they shall inherit the earth."

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By Herbert Beecher Hudnut

Special Reason for Rejoicing

Nor do I pray for them alone, but for all who believe in me by their spoken word; may they all be one. John 17:20-21



THREE years ago a group of men were studying together in Amsterdam, Holland, in one of the sections of the World Council of Churches. They came forth with this tremendous sentence: "The evident demand of God is that the whole church should set itself to the total task of winning the world for Christ." The Protestant churches have taken that word seriously, and are pointing their programs and efforts toward this objective, "winning the whole world for Christ."

Of course, this has been the objective of the Christian church since its beginning, when our Savior gave to a little band of disciples the important commission to carry his gospel of redemption, cautioning them that they should not cease until the entire world had been won for his Kingdom. You remember his word from St. Matthew 28:19 and 20, "Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Christians at Work

Just what are the churches, working together, doing today to reach this objective? We could mention Kagawa in Japan, setting out to win a million converts to the Christian way of life, to establish a thousand chapels for the preaching and teaching of Christianity in the rural areas of Japan, and inspiring Christian leaders to carry the gospel into all fields of human endeavor, political, economic and social. We could mention the Christian martyrs, both Protestant and Catholic, who have given their lives during the war years and even until now, that by their faith and by their loyalty to the gospel, even unto death, they might give a good witness, and proclaim Christ's saving truth to their nation. We could mention the work of Christian leaders in the councils of the United

HERBERT BEECHER HUDNUT is minister at Woodward Avenue Presbyterian, Detroit. He served as a second lieutenant of field artillery in World War I. Returning from the service, he prepared for the ministry at Western Theological Seminary. Dr. Hudnut ministered to churches in Dallas, Cleveland and Pittsburg before accepting his present pastorate.

Nations which most recently have borne fruit in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which we believe will one day be ratified by all of the governments of the world.

This year we have a special reason for rejoicing. On January 1, 1951, eight interdenominational cooperative agencies began to function as the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. No organizations have contributed more to all that is wholesome in American life and at the same time have been so little known to the average churchman as these eight agencies. They are the Federal Council, the Foreign Missions Conference, the Home Missions Council, the International Council of Religious Education, the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, the National Protestant Council on Higher Education, the United Council of Church Women and the United Stewardship Council. In addition to these eight interdenominational bodies, three others will be incorporated in the National Council. They are Church World Service (the Protestant and Orthodox world relief organization), the Protestant Radio Commission and the Protestant Film Commission.

The National Council is composed of 29 denominations with a total membership of 31 million. The *Christian Century* hails this as "the most important event in the life of the Protestant church since the Reformation." Let us try to understand why it is so important.

Step Toward Unity

First, it is a great step forward toward unity. Instead of eight agencies—one. Instead of eight strategic planning groups—one. Instead of eight boards of directors, eight staffs, eight financial drives—one; one churchwide, church-wise and church-worthy organization to do Christ's work in our country, through the Protestant church.

Think what it will mean to have the Federal Council of Churches, representing 27 million Protestant Christians, join hands with the International Council of Religious Education. The Federal Council, a federation of 27 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox bodies, has been concerned for forty-two years with cooperative work in evangelism, race relations, social services and Christian influence at home and abroad. The Interna-

tional Council of Religious Education, which unites 40 denominational boards of Christian education, has the same objectives to be reached through Christian literature, church schools for children, youth and adults, conferences, vacation schools and summer camps. Working together, these two great agencies will present a unified drive for the accomplishment of the Christian purpose that has never been possible in the past.

Second, the National Council of Churches is a new demonstration of Protestant strength in this country. The perils confronting the Christian churches in other countries have been the incentive needed to bring them together in the church of Christ in China, Japan and India. They have found strength and courage in that unity. We here are headed in the same direction, for we have found that the forces of evil—materialistic militarism, pagan secularism and aggressive atheism—are entirely too strong for a divided church. We are at long last sounding the tocsin: "United we stand!" And from 130,000 Protestant churches across America you may hear the Christian's marching hymn sung with a new enthusiasm:

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before.

Harbinger of Hope

Third, the National Council is a harbinger of hope. Into a world grown desolate because of hatred, desperate because of frustration, and despairing because of unbelief, comes a brightly burning Christian light. It is not a new dogma, nor a new pronouncement, nor a protracted meeting. It is rather the light of Christ illuminating the way to a finer, cooperative Protestant society where our tasks will be attacked more decisively and programs planned and carried through with greater zeal.

In northernmost Russia there is a little fishing village where for six months of the year there is a

gray darkness overhead. People get tired of it, and the longer it lasts the more tired they become. Toward the end of the six months, they stand along the streets and out from their homes, casting eager eyes to the twilight skies. And one day their watching is rewarded and they see a large bird flying across the heavens with the glint of the sunrise on its outspread wings. Then they know that the period of darkness is going to end. The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. is a new sign of brotherhood and ecumenicity, and a foregleam of that day when all men shall know the truth and be set free by it.

We are not divided,
All one body, we!
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.
Onward, Christian soldiers!

Exalts Christ

Finally, the National Council springs from our determination to exalt Christ in America and in the world. Each denomination has given him its supreme loyalty in the past; each has acknowledged him as the Savior of the world; each has tried to present a Christ-centered program; and each has held its aim to be the Kingdom of God in which Christ is Lord and to which he gave his full service and undying love. The question has long remained unanswered: why have the denominations not moved toward closer unity in thought and purpose? And the only answer that could be given was that human perversity, human obstinacy and human apathy had delayed the onward-marching Christian church. Too often we have had too little faith. But the spiritual climate has been purified by what happened in Cleveland.

Thank God for the new light of Christian inter-relatedness that shines forth from this newly established National Council of Churches! Thank God for this step toward unity backed by the Christian conscience!

A Lenten Prayer

By Donald Oswell Press

Pastor, First Congregational Church, Oskaloosa, Iowa

O FATHER GOD, our gladness in thee for the lengthening of the days, whence cometh the word Lent, knows no bounds. As the snows of winter melt and the earth prepares itself to spring forth in beauty, so every human heart senses the glory of the season of renewal. Let the hills break forth in singing! Let the sweet voices of the songbirds returning from their winter climes inspire us to worship thee. May the silent growth processes in root and trunk and branch be a silent ministry to us of newness of life. Nature comes to us as thy living garment, O God!

Our lives are too often like the areas in need of reclamation. Sometimes they are as hot and dry

and dusty as desert wastes, or as cold and barren as the tundra of the far north. As nature stages her rebirth with royal ceremony, we pray thee, may all the changes of the spring be inner as well as outer experiences, sacraments through the holy mystery of which our souls may enter into fellowship with thee.

May the passion of our Lord, upon which we look with awe in Lent, renew our passion for life; its highest motives and most noble principles. May it strengthen our characters. May his compassion flood like sunlight our darkest needs and light up brighter hopes for all the children of men. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Pulpit Post

Still They Come

SIR: Congratulations on a new and even better Pulpit. Your first issue of 1951 convinces me that The Pulpit will be a monthly "must" at least for this preacher. I am delighted to know that M. S. Enslin is to appear regularly in each issue. In his own words, "I have reason to believe" (without further laboring the point) that all of us are in for an unusual year of valuable reading.

Main St. Baptist,
Emporia, Va.

O. EDWYN LUTTRELL.

SIR: Congratulations! The magazine has been improved immensely by incorporating new features which now make The Pulpit more than just a sermon "barrel." I feel sure the magazine will have a wide reading because of these changes.

First Methodist,
Ellensburg, Wash.

HARDWICK W. HARSHMAN.

SIR: With the beginning of the second half of the century a fresh and throbbing vitality is evident in the new Pulpit. I have found it stimulating and vitally spiritualizing.

Beth Eden Baptist,
Oakland, Calif.

J. P. HUBBARD.

SIR: The new Pulpit is appealing to the eye—but more than that it is a challenge to every minister to improve his preaching. The feature "Preachers in Print" is especially appealing to me.

Trinity Episcopal,
San Jose, Calif.

HOWARD B. SCHOLTEN,
Youth Director.

SIR: I am impressed with the new Pulpit. I appreciate the very interesting and stimulating materials to be found on every page.

Church of God,
Belding, Mich.

R. J. TUTTLE,
Editor, *Michigan Bulletin*.

(These and some hundreds of other messages of congratulation have been received. We cannot publish all of these, of course. Nor will we be able to respond personally to the many letters. We are humbly thankful that our brethren approve and appreciate the new Pulpit. THE EDITORS.)

Sermons on Entire Book

SIR: Congratulations on twenty-one great years of Pulpit publication. I have received the magazine for some five or six years.

For some time I have wanted to see a sermon occasionally on an entire book of the Bible. Perhaps once a quarter a sermon, which gives the general purpose of the writer or writers and the impact of the book, might be published.

It would be a help to minister and layman to get a comprehensive, popular approach to the problem of the bearing of a larger body of scripture upon the complex, many sided affairs of the modern world.

Best wishes for many more decades of good Pulpits.

Community Chapel Presbyterian,
Decatur, Ill.

BEE CROUCH.

Preaching to Unbelievers

SIR: You have posed a question (Sept. 1950) that is the dilemma of every thinking preacher, viz., "How shall the preacher address his message to a society which once believed it but believes it no more?" It is the kind of question that the preacher must seek to answer with every preaching opportunity. It is a question to keep him alert and vigorous and searching in the themes of his preaching.

From the days of the ethical prophets to the present,

preachers have had to deal with unbelievers. Amos had his Amaziah who complained, "The land is not able to bear all his words" (Amos 7:10). In reply, Amos cited his call to preach and then thundered, "Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord . . ." (Amos 7:16). John the Baptist and Jesus found their unbelievers among the re-

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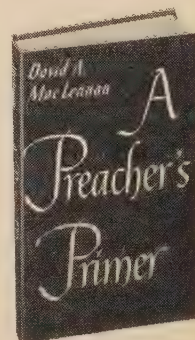
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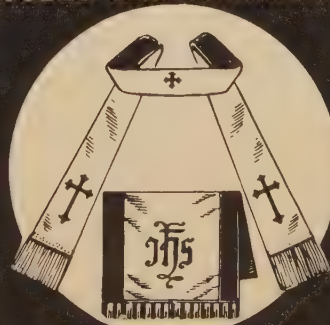
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ligiously literate. Great preaching through the ages has won believers, but it has also shown, in sharp relief, the unbelievers.

Now, you have given us a true analysis of *some* of our generation—"a society which once believed it but believes it no more." Beyond the "once believers" is a greater number who have never come close enough to believe in the first place. They are unbelievers by underexposure. How shall we preach today? Perhaps Paul's answer is still valid: "I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22).

First Christian,
Benton, Ill.

EARLE BARCLAY.

SIR: As I preach the great doctrines of the Christian faith I try always to raise two questions: (1) What does a man lose if he rejects this doctrine? (2) What does a man gain if he accepts and practices it?

First Presbyterian,
Twin Falls, Idaho.

DONALD B. BLACKSTONE.

SIR: . . . Preachers believe intellectually in the gospel of Jesus, but all too few preach it with boldness. Fewer still are absolutely committed to it.

New Castle, Pa.

WILLIAM B. MATTHEWS.

SIR: A preacher has to face the fact that the average person in the Christian church today does not know enough about the gospel to believe it. He must also recognize that faulty preaching and teaching has been a major contributing factor in bringing about this condition.

First Congregational,
New London, Wis.

ARTHUR A. MEINHARDT.

SIR: I propose three approaches to contemporary man: begin with what people do believe, demonstrate that the

scientific tests of truth reveal Christianity to be reality, and dramatize the Christian principle that one should make the most of what he possesses.

First Christian,
Morganfield, Ky.

GERALD B. KRUGER.

SIR: I venture to state that your sentence: "More church members than we like to think do not take seriously the offer of salvation through Christ," could be as well applied to the ministry.

Hope Mission Chapel,
Beaver Falls, Pa.

C. J. BONAR.

SIR: . . . We are eloquent about the cross; we have mastered the fine art of preaching; but our hearts are set on the fleshpots of worldly success. Our terrible ineffectiveness is the sign that God is preparing new instruments for his purposes.

Third Presbyterian,
Kansas City, Mo.

ELLIS JONES HOUGH.

Heart of the Matter

SIR: Whether in the old format or the splendid new one, The Pulpit has for a good many years been of help and inspiration to me. Just wanted to express my appreciation.

Sincerely and earnestly let me commend you and thank you for "A Thought for the Month" in the February number. Nothing that I have seen comes nearer the heart of this matter. When, oh when, will we give Jesus Christ the kind of church he deserves? Our man-made impertinence is colossal, and nowhere more apparent than in our "sectarian fragments."

Ruby Ave. Congregational,
Kansas City, Kan.

EDWARD L. BAKER.

Sermon Summaries

'The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail Against It'

Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—Matt. 16:18.

SCHOLARS are not agreed as to the meaning of Christ's words, "on this rock I will build my church." Some scholars hold that Christ could not have meant Peter as he was then, for later he would deny Christ. Others hold that Jesus was building his church on the divine revelation, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Still others hold that Christ was building it upon humanity. However, there has been no argument upon the latter part of the statement, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The church has endured and will endure throughout all generations.

There is a revival of interest in the church. One of the secrets of the strength of the church rests on the fact that in a darkened day its light shines all the brighter. So for one church building that is torn down, a dozen are being built in every community of a hundred thousand or more as people are realizing that they cannot live without the power of the church.

What are these continuing marks of the creative church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against? What were the distinctive and distinguishing features of the early apostolic church?

First of all, it was a vital and real fellowship. Its motive and dynamic was that of love. It was a fellowship that cut across all lines of social creation and created a new order of Christians, or sons of God. In this early organization Onesimus, a runaway slave, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, Luke, a doctor, Lydia, a seller of purple, and men and women from all walks of life discovered a spirit that bound them together in a fellowship of understanding and love.

Second, the church was the body of Christ. It was his spirit made real in the world. This, too, they found in the early church, and this, too, is the secret of spiritual power. To early Christians the church was a miniature of the Kingdom of God and it was their challenge and duty to spread the Kingdom of God like leaven until it should encircle the globe. It is in this spirit that hospitals have been erected, schools have been established, the light of the message of Christ taken around the globe. It is the power of the living church. You do not find a vital faith where there is not the de-

sire to share and win others to the fellowship of love.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Christianity Still Has Appeal

THIS is an age when everything from the atom bomb to aspirin is advertised. Advertising is the nation's biggest business. Its formula is: "Get a person to want something for himself, and to want it bad enough, and a sale is made, a consumer is won." The art of advertising is that of making a person feel that his life is incomplete and that what it lacks wears a price tag. By continually engaging people in the habit of indulging their ego, this modern business Goliath creates what is commonly known as "a market."

Almost "every hour on the hour," Americans are bombarded with pictures and words on television, radio, and in print which beg us, implore us, plead with us to indulge ourselves. Last night, within sixty minutes, I heard these phrases over the radio. "You owe it to yourself . . ."; "Don't wait another day . . ."; "Be first in your town to own . . ."; "Your friends will envy you . . ." Pick up any newspaper and you will read words of persuasion in gaudy print; in maga-

zines you will see pictures that invite you to project yourself into a dream world of beauty and convenience. There are neon signs against the night sky telling you about something to drink, something to smoke, something to eat that champions eat, something to make you beautiful, something to make you a man of distinction, something to make you admired by others, something to reduce work to the mere pushing of a button, something to take away your worries and let you recline in an "air cushioned glider" the rest of your life.

When you realize the incessant bid on the part of every conceivable agency for the attention and money of the public, it is not difficult to understand that many people are concerned about the appeal and drawing power of Christianity in our civilization. When religion in general and Christianity in particular does attract public attention, a decidedly different method is used than that employed by current advertising. This may be all to the good; I believe it is. Christianity has more to offer than a "fluid drive" or a "skin you love to touch" or a "clear-view screen."

Nevertheless, the question "Can Christ win individuals who are bewitched by the clever schemes of man?" is valid. More than a few centuries separate the ways utilized by Christ to enlist Peter, Andrew, James and John, and the blatant screaming of our newfangled advertising. Jesus did not promise to make any potential follower "a man of distinction" or "a woman of exquisite charm"; but he did make a covenant with his disciples, he did promise to do something for them, he did pledge to make them. His invitation to the four fishermen, "Follow me and I will make you . . ." is as valid for you and me as it was for them. Ponder what he did for them and remember he will do the same for us.—*A. Nelson Doak, First Reformed, Elmhurst, N. Y.*

You're Not an Isolated Island

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.—Rom. 12:5.

MOST of us are no doubt familiar with the old legend of the Indian chief who called his sons to his death-bed for one last lesson in life. Remember how he took a bundle of twigs and had each of his sons try to break the bundle without avail, and then had the bundle untied and, despite his weakness, took the twigs one by one and broke them to impress upon his sons the simple truth of the weakness of the individual standing alone and the all but indestructible strength of togetherness.

I sometimes wonder if in our past emphasis on rugged individualism during our nation's growing pains we have not also carried over into our religious practices and faith an overdose of the same sort of things. We

have rightly emphasized the importance and worth of the individual in the past. With the not illusory danger in the present of the encroachments of a welfare-state attitude toward life, we must continue to emphasize the fact that the individual is the most supremely important factor in the whole world. Yet there does arise the danger that each man may think himself to be an isolated island apart from everything and everyone else.

Private enterprise, rugged individualism, self-determination, isolationism, and so on down the line, are all nice-sounding phrases in a world where we can feel the hot breath of totalitarianism breathing down our necks; but ordinary life at our common planes of existence proves time and again the simple fact that we need others and

others need us, and it is only the most stupid and ignorant and drunken with conceit who can foolishly reiterate, "I can get along without you."

We are not isolated islands. We cannot go along always alone without peril to our souls. We are all, consciously or unconsciously, hopefully and hopelessly religious. We admit our needs frequently, even if only to our own inmost selves, but so often we do so little about it and deny our own souls the food we need to keep us spiritually alive. We need each other and we can all share the best in each other by coming together in and as members of the fellowship of believers men call the church of Christ.—*Herman J. Kregel, Post Chaplain, United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.*

Hymns for Today

Processional

Aurelia 7.6.7.6.D

To thee, O God Eternal,
We lift our hearts this morn,
And ask that on our spirits
New light and truth may dawn.
We follow where thy guidance
Reveals the path of life;
We seek not ease or glory,
But courage for the strife.

We look for broad horizons,
For glimpses of the gleam,
For deeds that need great daring,
For vision and for dream.
We pledge a faith enduring,
Unmastered by our doubt;
A confidence so certain
All fears are put to rout.

Our voices join this morning
With all the good and true;
In all our hearts the promise
Our Master's work to do.
As on the way we travel,
The one by Jesus trod,
We hope for new adventures
Through trust in man and God.

And in a world imperfect,
With tasks our worth to prove,

Direct in work and service,
Our wisdom and our love.
So living by thy guidance,
Until our final breath,
Keep us, O God Eternal,
Steadfast in life or death. Amen.
HARRY WOODS KIMBALL.

An Easter Hymn

Antioch. C.M.

On Easter Day our praise we sing
To thee, our risen Lord.
Our love and life to thee we bring,
O thou Eternal Word!

We turn from toil and weary loads
And find our rest in thee;
We drink beside life's dusty roads,
Thou Fount of Galilee!

We raise to thee, this Easter Day,
Our praise of joyful song;
For unto thee, the Truth, the Way,
All joy and praise belong.

O Christ! we follow in that way
Thou openest wide to men,
To stand within eternal day,
And sing the great amen!
JOHN W. SHACKFORD.

Hymn of Brotherhood

Toulon. 10.10.10.10.

GOD of all nations scattered over earth,
Look now on us and bring a new world-birth.
Breathe thou thy Spirit into every heart;
For we are thine and Lord of all thou art.

Over all mortals shines thy kindly sun;
O loving Father, make the nations one.
Calm every strife and bid all tumults cease;
Grant us today the gift of lasting peace.

Transform our minds and stir our hearts anew
That all may heed and hold thy vision true.
God of all men, let war be now withstood;
Bring now thy Kingdom in, Christ's brotherhood.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

By John R. Scotford



No More 'Great Preachers'

FORTY years ago we had them. Two thousand people from Chicago's hotels and suburbs were crowding into the Auditorium theater Sunday after Sunday to listen to the mellifluous voice of Frank W. Gunsaulus. Plymouth Church in Brooklyn and its Newell Dwight Hillis were prime attractions for Sunday visitors to New York, and during Lent a thousand people could hear a pin drop in the Broadway Tabernacle as Charles E. Jefferson quietly preached. A few years later the rotund figure and torrential vocabulary of S. Parkes Cadman were known to millions. In 1931 on a July Sunday I saw four lines of people extending around the corner waiting to get into Riverside Church to hear Harry Emerson Fosdick.

These great preachers are all dead, except Fosdick, who is retired. They have had no true successors. Today the only candidates for their mantles would be two New Yorkers: Ralph Sockman, who scintillates for the benefit of the intelligentsia, and Norman Vincent Peale, who fills his church with nostalgic Republicans in the morning and questing souls seeking peace of mind in the evening. Both men are as well known for their writing as for their preaching; neither is a "household word" in the same sense as Gunsaulus, Cadman and Fosdick. What has happened?

What Has Happened?

Many answers could be given, but the one that covers the most ground is that radio has changed the listening habits of the American people. They no longer need to seek out their celebrities; instead of going to hear them, they can turn the dial and listen. In this process they get the voice and the words without physical presence. With Gunsaulus, Hillis and Cadman, their personal presence was more commanding than what they said. The disembodied radio voice shifts the em-

phasis from the personality of the speaker to the content of what he is saying. Old-style oratory just doesn't go over the air.

In the early days of radio Cadman made a reputation for his questions and answers and Fosdick for his crystal-clear sermons, but nobody has taken the place of either man. Radio is a good medium for good sermons such as any minister of reasonable industry can prepare, but not for great preaching such as our fathers relished.

The passing of the "great preachers" is probably a good thing. Their success was ephemeral. Fosdick is the only one of those mentioned who has left a great church behind him. The others appeared to be achieving far more than was actually the case. Once their reputation had been established, all their churches needed to do was to open the doors on Sunday morning and let the people in. The vast congregations which came so easily vanished just as quickly—as was discovered by a certain church in Washington where Calvin Coolidge was a faithful attendant.

Average Sermon is Better

The passing of the "great preachers" has had two wholesome by-products.

Increasingly people are going to such-and-such a church rather than to hear so-and-so. The custom of calling a church by the name of its minister—once the only designation many people knew—is declining. The pulling power of a modern church springs from a combination of many factors, of which the preaching of the minister is just one. The emphasis is shifting away from just listening to the preacher and toward the worship of God. How far this trend has gone depends upon the congregation. However, it tends to stabilize church attendance. The expectation of a religious experience through worship is a more potent force for drawing people to the house of God than the hope of a good sermon.

Despite the passing of the "great preachers," the average sermon gets steadily better. Young preachers are no longer tempted to imitate the pulpit idols of the hour. We are being spared the plague of little Jeffersons and would-be Fosdicks. Ministers are less anxious to make reputations for

themselves as pulpit orators, with preaching as an end in itself, and more inclined to find their satisfaction in using the sermon as a means toward building the total life of the church.

Radio Responsible

In a way, radio has relieved the church of one of its responsibilities. The people who want just great preaching without reference to an immediate situation can get it over the air. That is the place for glittering generalities and the impersonal proclamation of truth. This leaves to the local pastor the task of hand-tailoring the gospel to meet the needs of a particular group of people. The efficacy of any public address depends upon the clearness with which the speaker apprehends where he is and to whom he is talking.

This is why the sermons preached by visiting dignitaries before ecclesiastical assemblages and the candidating efforts of ambitious pulpiteers are usually flops. They are blasts directed at the clouds in the sky rather than at the people in the pews. On the other hand, the minister who knows his people and speaks to their problems does not need to be "eloquent" in the old sense. His words will have power because of their fitness to a particular time and place. More ministers are preaching in this way—and more people are going to church!

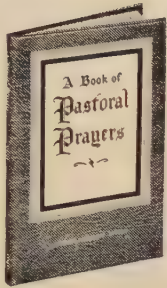
The passing of the "great preachers" has been accompanied by an increase in the grand total of church attendance. There will undoubtedly be men in the future who become eminent because of their homiletic gifts, but one questions whether the cult of the "great preacher" will ever be revived.

• A Heavy Load Can Be a Blessing

ONE bright day a fleet of little sailboats fluttered about near the shore of Lake Michigan while far out on the deep a great freighter carried its heavy load. Suddenly all was dark, the wind blew and rain fell in torrents. Just as suddenly all was calm and bright again. But all the little boats had sought harbor; they couldn't take it. The loaded liner, however, plowed on as if nothing unusual had occurred.—H. K. Grose, *Camp Point, Ill.*

JOHN R. SCOTFORD is editor of The Advance, published by the Congregational Christian Churches. Formerly he pastored churches in Oklahoma, Texas, Illinois and Ohio. Among the books he has written are The Church Beautiful and Church Union, Why Not? His home is in Mt. Vernon, New York.

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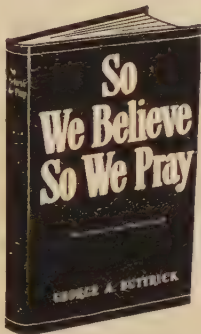
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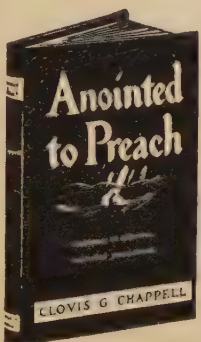
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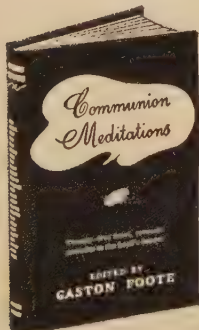
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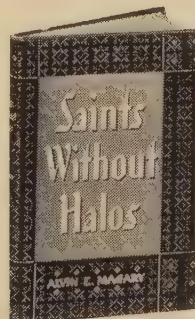
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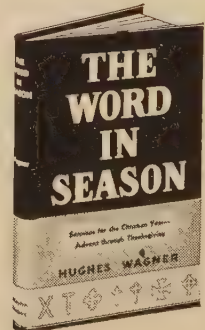
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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'Sunday Morning Blindman's Buff'

DURING the sermon one phrase was repeated again and again. It had first appeared in the opening paragraph, and as the preacher progressed it recurred with almost clocklike regularity. The phrase was "I aim to." Apparently he was "aiming" at many things and in many directions. When for the dozenth time the same words sounded forth, there came from a back pew in tones of outrage, "Parson, for goodness' sake [actually, "goodness" was not the word, but it gives the general idea] pull the trigger!"

This anecdote may or may not have foundation in fact. When I first heard it, now more than thirty years ago, it seemed to me that its point lay solely in the sane and salty conclusion. I am convinced that the outraged remark from the back pew would be a sound criticism of many a sermon even in the year of grace 1951. But as I listen to sermons—and in the course of a year I hear a good many—it seems to me that there is more in this anecdote of yesterday than appears on the surface.

The preacher may have erred, but at least he was trying to tell his congregation what he was trying to do. Many have been the sermons I have listened to where that was by no means the case. Minute after minute passed and still, despite the announced subject and the repeated text, I was at an utter loss to know where the preacher was going, what, if anything, he was aiming at. Much of what he was saying was good. But what was his purpose, save to fill twenty-five minutes? Why was he urging this? Why had he criticized that? Occasionally after fifteen minutes of perplexed guesswork I suddenly got the clue. Oh, *this* is what he is driving at! And for the rest of the sermon I was trying in my mind to rearticulate his earlier paragraphs into what I was now convinced was his plan of action. At other times the homily had reached its end and the final hymn was sounding forth with my uncertainty still unresolved.

Personally, that seems to me bad preaching. Were I ever to be charged with teaching homiletics—a truly horrible thought, that! I have taught too many years in a theological seminary to have any illusions left at this point. The professor of preaching has the toughest job of all, for all his colleagues know just what ought to be

done—well, were I ever to be charged with teaching homiletics, one thing I should insist upon: within the first thirty seconds the congregation should be shown clearly and concisely the target at which the preacher is shooting. Then they could call his shots. Has he made a bull's-eye? How many times have his bullets gone wide astray?

We preachers forget all too easily that our congregations are, so to speak, reading the score at sight. Or better phrased, they are an impromptu audience. In theory the preacher has worked on his subject, has an end in view, and has marshaled his material for that purpose. Thus, as he says this, argues that, alludes to something else, it is all part and parcel of his whole discourse. But those in the pews have not had the opportunity of looking over his shoulder in his study as he sought to build his thoughts together. Too often they do not have even the foggiest idea where he is going, and so Sunday after Sunday they find themselves participants in a sort of spiritual blindman's buff.

For the occasional preacher who deliberately tries to keep his congregation from understanding what he is talking about, I am at the moment unconcerned. There are, unfortunately, too many such still in circulation. They may be left aside for a more convenient season. (Other columns have to be written.) Most preachers, I am convinced, are not in that class. They do not want to preach "over the heads of their people." Instead they are willing and eager to make clear to others what is clear to them. But so often they pass by the easiest way to insure success. If they would compress into one paragraph—better yet into one clear and grammatical sentence—precisely what they plan to do, and thus let the congregation in on the secret at the very beginning of the sermon, it is safe to say that there would be an instant and conspicuous improvement in what is, and should be, the backbone of every service of formal worship, the sermon. Nor need it be objected that that were too hazardous. Too often, as it is, our failure to hit the bull's-eye is all too clear. Why make it the more conspicuous? But, after all, congregations are remarkably patient—what preacher can deny that? Everyone is entitled to a few misses now and again.

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

THE scholars of the land recently held their annual meeting. Men and women from every field of human inquiry shared the results of their year's research. The first word came

• *Something Tremendous Needs to Happen*

from asembled astronomers who reminded us again of the vastness of God's universe. Harlow Shapley of Harvard reported that a billion galaxies were visible through the new 200-inch telescope, with another billion hidden by the obscuring dust near the plane of the Milky Way. "This total," Dr. Shapley said, "is probably not more than one per cent of the total galaxy-populated universe."

Another group heard a startling word from the world in miniature as seen through a microscope. In Cleveland, Dr. Ralph Wycoff addressed the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He showed the first photographs taken through the new electron microscope of the constituents of living cells. The report was headlined: "Super-Microscope Finds a New World."

Here we stand, then, at the beginning of a new half-century, with the telescope and the microscope revealing whole new vistas of the physical creation. Even so there is not much joy in our cities. For one thing more is needful! Something tremendous has got to happen to the mind and heart of the man who looks through these lenses, and also to the mind and heart of the man who walks our streets unmindful of scientific achievements. Paul put the hope unforgettably in his letter to the Romans: "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." —Roger J. Squires, *Methodist Church, Red Bank, N. J.*

• *'Conversion' Still Works*

A YOUNG skinny G.I. walked into a bookstore a few years ago, whistling away to his heart's content. The clerk couldn't refrain from remarking, "My, but somebody is certainly happy." The young soldier smilingly replied: "I sure am, lady. I sure am. I've just come back from overseas where I was in a German prison camp for over a year." "Well," the clerk said, "I suppose that's as good a reason as any."

"But you don't understand," retorted the G.I. "In the prison we didn't have much to read, and anything in print we grabbed up. One day I ran across an old, dog-eared copy of a religious novel I never would have

looked at back in the States. I never went to church except maybe for Easter. But this story told how everybody who came under the influence of Jesus Christ had wonderful things happen to them and it helped them start living all over again. I believed that, too, and I'm sure he touched me. Because suddenly I felt happy inside of my heart and everything changed. I was set free before our army came. I was set free from myself, which was

archaic ring—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . . old things are passed away; behold all things have become new"—but that's still what does and can happen to people who are willing to accept the challenge to start living all over again. —Herman J. Kregel, *Post Chaplain, United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.*

• *No Burdens Of Doubt*

SOMETHING in a child responds naturally to the overwhelming wonder of life. It keeps the child buoyant and cheerful in spite of many disappointments. Children have so much faith in life that they place no limit on their imagination or their expectations. That is why little children cry for the moon.

A few weeks ago my sister in California wrote about her little boy going with his grandfather into the woods to get a Christmas tree. They found several good trees, but the little boy shook his head at all of them. For two hours they walked through the woods trying to find a tree that would satisfy. Finally, his grandfather had to select a tree and cut it down even though the little fellow didn't like it. When they returned home, the boy was crying. He didn't want that tree. He didn't want any of those trees. His mother asked him why, and the little fellow explained that he wanted a tree with lights on it.

Children expect wonderful things of life. That is why little children enter the Kingdom of heaven before adults. Little children don't have any burdens of doubt to slow them down.—Virgil A. Kraft, *Methodist Chaplain at the University of Chicago.*

• *The Pull of An Ideal*

HILDA Ives was a woman preacher in a rural church in Maine. The home of a poor mountain woman had burned to the ground and the Rev. Mrs. Ives had raised some money by community subscriptions to rebuild that home. It so happened that the project was oversubscribed by a few dollars and Mrs. Ives asked the old lady if there was something special that she would like in the new home. And the old lady responded: "Yes, there is. You see, Mrs. Ives, I have spent most of my life in the kitchen washing dishes. And all the time I have known as I stood at my kitchen sink with the bare wall in front of me that that wall separated me from a wonderful view of the White mountains. Could you please put a window

Pulpit Calendar

Mar. 3—Shabbat Shekalin (Jewish).

Mar. 4—Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Mar. 11—Passion Sunday.

Mar. 18—Palm Sunday.

Mar. 18-24—Holy Week.

Mar. 22—Maundy Thursday; Purim (Jewish).

Mar. 23—Good Friday.

Mar. 24—Easter Eve.

Mar. 25—Easter.

Apr. 1—First Sunday after Easter.

Apr. 8—Second Sunday after Easter.

Apr. 15—Third Sunday after Easter.

Apr. 21-28—Passover (Jewish).

Apr. 22—Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Apr. 29—Rural Life Sunday.

May 3—Ascension Day.

May 6—Sunday after Ascension.

May 13—Whitsunday (Pentecost); Christian Unity Sunday.

May 20—Trinity Sunday.

May 27—Second Sunday after Pentecost.

May 30—Memorial Day.

SEASONS: Lent, Eastertide, Whitsuntide.

ALTAR COLORS: Lent, violet; Maundy Thursday, white; Good Friday, black; Easter Eve, bare or black; Easter and Eastertide, white; Whitsunday and Trinity, white; Whitsuntide, green.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

the greatest prison I was ever in. When I came home to my wife—she's really pretty and sweet and all that, but you know she's lacking something. She's heavyhearted and pessimistic and doesn't really seem to have any real fun in living. So I've come down to this store to get a copy of that book and I'm going to read it to her in the hope that she will get what I got. I want the same thing to happen to her that happened to me!"

The young man began living all over again because something did happen inside of him. People used to call that sort of thing conversion. Call it by any other name if you want to—but it still works in practice. Maybe the words of the Apostle Paul have a bit of an

in my kitchen over the sink so I could see the mountains?"

Well, they put the window in over the sink, and after the old lady had been settled a while Mrs. Ives called upon her. In the course of the conversation the old lady said: "I keep my window clean and never put anything on the sill to clutter it up. I can see farther now since my husband has gone, and I know that somewhere out there beyond the mountains he is waiting for me."

What we all need is a window over the sink. Our daily lives are cluttered with so much that keeps us from the vision splendid. We don't have a window open toward the mountains. We have our nose to the grindstone, we are chained to a timetable, we are bent over the kitchen sink. It is about time we put a window over the sink. We need the upward lift, the pull of an ideal tugging at our hearts.—*Ellsworth L. Richardson, First Congregational, Rockaway Beach, N. Y.*

• **'Some Friends Were Missing'**

AFTER giving a concert in a mid-western city, Paderewski was found back stage in silent, preoccupied mood. One of his aides asked if he were ill. "No, no," the great musician replied, "but some friends were missing—the gray-haired couple. They were not in their usual seats in the fourth row." The aide was surprised. "I didn't know you had friends in this town. Did you know them well?" he asked. "I knew them very well," Paderewski explained. "But I never met them. I liked the way they listened. Every time I have played here for twenty years, I have always played for them." He shook his head gravely saying, "I hope there's nothing seriously wrong."

What would become of us if it were not for the influence of others? And how often our need is unguessed, even by those close to us!—*Russell Van Alen, First Presbyterian, Dinuba, Calif.*

• **God Sees Our Offerings**

DR. John A. Broadus, when his ushers were about to take the offering one Sunday morning, left his pulpit, walked down to where one usher was beginning his collection and went along with him, looking at every penny, nickel, dime, quarter and dollar that went into the basket. You may well imagine that some of the people were angry. Some were confused, other were shamefaced; all were evidently surprised.

When the collection was over, Dr. Broadus went back to his pulpit to speak from his morning's text: He said: "My people, if you take it to heart that I have seen your offerings this day and know just what sacrifices you have made and what sacrifices you have not made, remember that

the Son of God, your Savior, goes about the aisles with every usher and sees with his sleepless eye every cent put into the collection by his people."
—*William Ward Ayer, Calvary Radio Ministry, New York.*

• **'I Lay It on Your Heart'**

THROUGH the years, the Korean people have been a Bible-loving people. They have had the complete Bible in their own language since 1911, when it was published jointly by the American Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Bible Society of Scotland.

So great was the call for Bibles, at the end of World War II, that when shipments of Korean Scriptures from the American Bible Society reached the country, it was necessary to ration the books so that a fair distribution might be made. "It was just the sweet rain after many years of continued drought," said the secretary of the Korean Bible Society in Seoul.

Today when war has laid waste the land, Scriptures are being eagerly welcomed. Chaplain Harold Voelkel, who after the restoration of Seoul was one of three Chaplains sent by General MacArthur to help organize a Chaplain's Corp in the South Korean Army, has written the American Bible

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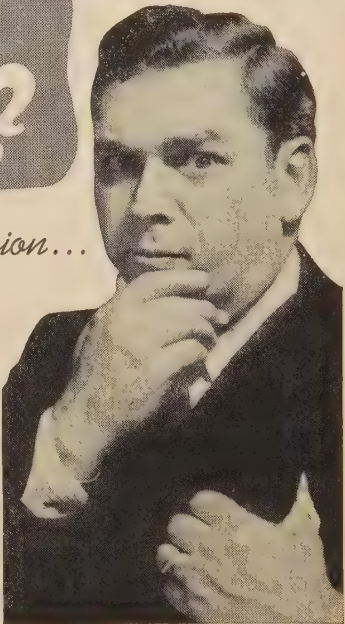
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Society: "It is difficult to tell all that it meant to the Christians to have Korean Scriptures arrive. Korea is prostrate for the cities are not only wrecks, leveled in the fighting, but the church leaders have been carried off. I lay it on your heart to challenge America to pray and labor for this Church that is going through the fires of Red brutality and oppression."—*American Bible Society.*

• *Chaplains Are On the Job*

Parents can take hope when they remember that their boy in the service has pastoral care. The role of the chaplain as GI counselor is emphasized in a letter received by the Army from the parents of a soldier who went to "see the chaplain."

The soldier, whose home is in California, is stationed in the East. He consulted his chaplain, after some hesitation, concerning a personal problem. The result is indicated in the following letter received from his parents.

"Dear Chaplain —:

"Thank you very much for your letter. — has always written one or two letters daily to us telling us about his work, how he enjoys it, and how interesting and easy it was for him.

"He writes often too, and in all his letters he writes about you and how much your talking to him helped him. He said he feels like a big load has been removed from his feelings.

"I am sorry he didn't go to you first instead of holding it all inside.

"Yes, — is no better than all your boys now, and may God help you and bless you, for it is men like you that the boys need now.

"Please write again soon, and if you are ever coming out our way, our house is open to you."

While the primary mission of the Army chaplain is to serve as spiritual leader to the troops in his organization, like the clergyman in civilian life, he is always available to discuss service men's personal problems.—*Chief of Chaplain's Office.*

• *Heed the Warning*

GOD has put across the road of life the barricade of the cross of his Son. That barricade demands that life be changed, that man be converted, that the soul be born again.

Two men started out on a fishing trip. They came to a side road with a sign across it marked "closed." However there were some fresh automobile tracks on the other side of the sign. Deciding to ignore the sign they started down the road, only to come to a dead end about a half mile beyond. They turned around, and on coming back they found on the reverse side of the sign these words, "It really was closed, wasn't it?"

God has given us the warning. Some people go on in spite of the warning. Many may never have the chance to retrace their steps to come back to the cross. Now is the time of decision for Christ. Not tomorrow but now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation.—*Samuel Arthur Jeanes, First Baptist, Merchantville, N. J.*



Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Common Denominators

MUSIC is a universal language despite Moscow's attempt to compel Shostakovich to compose proletarian music in the Marxist idiom, whatever that is! As for church music, the idea that a particular hymn is "Methodist" or "Congregational Christian" or "Lutheran" is untenable. The worth of any tune lies in the message to the worshiper. It is not conditioned by the church to which the composer belonged. So also with the stanzas. Their true worth is in the message they convey to Christians of all ages, in all places.

Renowned Baptists

Samuel Francis Smith was a renowned Baptist minister. The popularity of his hymns is in direct proportion to their emphasis on universal Christian generalities instead of denominational particulars. "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" is a national favorite. "The Morning Light is Breaking" takes its place with the noblest missionary poems. "Softly Fades the Twilight Ray" is hardly equaled as a Sunday evening hymn. But "Down to the Sacred Wave," stressing a denominational concept of baptism, has never been nor is ever likely to be widely accepted.

Remember, too, that it was a Baptist, John Fawcett, who was inspired to write the finest hymn of Christian fellowship in all literature, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." Yet Fawcett practiced closed communion.

Ecumenical Anglican

Anglican Bishop Reginald Heber never mentions apostolic succession in any of his hymns. "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," "The Son of God Goes Forth to War," "Bread of the World in Mercy Broken" and "Holy, Holy, Holy" never once imply that a Disciples minister is unworthy because he is not in the "true line of ordination" to administer communion in an Episcopal church. Those hymns deal with basic Christian convictions. Hence their worldwide acceptance by all denominations.

Presbyterian George Matheson endeared himself to millions with "Make Me a Captive, Lord" and "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go." Neither hymn makes reference to John Calvin or to the Westminster Assembly and its

catechisms. They deal with those beliefs that are shared by all Christians everywhere. Unitarian Sarah Flower Adams finds a place in our hymnals with "Nearer My God to Thee." Her verses never mention abhorrent trinitarianism! Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress" rallied scattered Protestants into a united fighting force. The separatist attitudes of some present-day Lutheran denominations had no place in the founder's hymns.

Methodist Charles Wesley says nothing about the "witness of the Spirit" and the "itinerant ministry" in either "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" or "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Bishops, moderators and conference presidents can unite in "Love Divine, All Love Excelling" without dissent from any line of it.

Strict Predestinarian

Strict predestinarian Augustus Toplady went beyond his Calvinism when he created "Rock of Ages." Still, who cares which author was an Arminian and which a Calvinist! All these hymns have their places in our hearts because they describe experiences which are common to all believers.

Soon-to-become Roman Catholic John Henry Newman made no hint of papal infallibility or the "assumption of Mary" in "Lead, Kindly Light." That is why the poem is found in the hymnals of all churches. And one can hear no faint rustling of a tambourine in "The Old Rugged Cross" even though its creator, Rev. George Bennard, is now associated with the Salvation Army.

All One in Singing

In our singing we are much more Christian, and have infinitely more in common with our fellow believers, than in the reciting of our creeds or even in our preaching. There is, in reality, no "Episcopalian" or "Presbyterian" hymnal. There is only the hymnal for Christian worship, prepared and published, it is true, by many publishing houses, but belonging to all Christian denominations. In these books, whatever the imprint, are found the common denominators of Christendom. And in the singing of them we are all one in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lenten Suggestions

MORE than at any other time of the year, the preacher is conscious of the calendar of the church year during Lent. In recent years ministers of the nonliturgical churches have come to know the many values of a preaching schedule that takes cognizance of the historic seasons and holy days of the church. Baptists, Congregational Christians, Presbyterians, Brethren and other denominations which in the past gave little heed to such matters are finding new meaning in worship as they observe the various emphases of the church seasons. Methodists, returning to liturgy and seasonal observances after a hundred years' trend away from formality in worship, are rapidly becoming the leaders of the liturgical renaissance. One such leader is **Hughes Wagner**, pastor of cathedral-like Trinity Methodist in Springfield, Mass. His new book ★★ **THE WORD IN SEASON** (Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.00) contains sermons for the Christian year from Advent through Thanksgiving. Its Lenten and Holy Week offerings are particularly good.

FOR both preachers and laymen who would like an especially appropriate book to read during Holy Week, the Macmillan Co. has done a real service in publishing **Frederick C. Grant's** ★★ **CHRIST'S VICTORY AND OURS** (\$2.00). This is really a book for Good Friday and Easter, and it can easily be read (85 pages) over the week end. But busy preachers may need to take the whole week digesting its timeless messages. Dr. Grant, an Episcopalian who is professor of biblical theology at Union Theological Seminary, begins his little volume with an answer to the often asked question, Why did Jesus die? This is followed by separate considerations of each of the seven last words. In a final chapter entitled "The Gospel of the Resurrection" he climaxes one of the finest treatments of the crucifixion and resurrection published in recent years. It is a book to be reread Easter after Easter.

THERE are two other recent books which pastors will find particularly valuable this lenten season, first in their own reading and then to pass on to their church members. **Alvin E. Magary's** ★ **SAINTS WITHOUT HALOS** (Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.00) is so entirely readable that every church would profit by buying several copies and circulating them among the families of the church this Lent. That probably won't happen because it is so en-

tirely preachable, too. ★ **YOUR LIFE COUNTS**, edited by **Hoover Rupert** (Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$1.75), should be handled in the same way among the young people of the church. Too bad Rupert chose only Methodists as contributors to the volume. But its messages are broadly Christian in their presentation of the Christian way for youth in today's confused and changing world.

PREACHED in his inimitable manner, **Clovis Chappell's** sermons thrill and move his listeners. Reduced to print, they read like any other averagely good sermon in the southern style. Nevertheless, there grew up a Chappell vogue. Reworked, all too often with few changes or additions, and preached in thousands of southern, midwestern and western pulpits, the impact of Dr. Chappell's many volumes of sermons probably rate him second only to Harry Emerson Fosdick in influencing American preaching in the interim between world wars. For that reason alone his autobiographical preaching guide ★ **ANointed TO PREACH** (Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$1.50) merits reading whether you consider his enormous influence on 20th century preaching a bane or a blessing. Fortunately, this new book deserves to be read for other

reasons. The final chapter, "Keeping Fit," will be an inspiration to men whose seminary days are a good many years behind them. For young ministers just beginning their pastoral duties, the whole book rates four stars.

ROUNDUP

THE GREAT REDEMPTION. By **Chester Warren Quimby**. Macmillan, \$2.50. After giving too long an introductory statement (two chapters!), Dr. Quimby gets down to his interpretation of Paul's interpretation of Christian redemption. Essentially uncritical, this commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans is easy to read and abounds in sermon helps. Too bad the author did not elaborate his brief note (pp. 209-11) on preaching from Romans.

★ **THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND.** By **Harold A. Cockburn**. Revell, \$1.50. The preface on sermon preparation is worth the price of the book. It was probably not in the author's best interest to place the preface first or indeed to include it at all. The sermonettes that follow do not live up to its high promise. But many of them are excellent sermon starters and some of the lengthier treatments are really first-rate sermons.

THE PULPIT TREASURY OF WIT AND HUMOR. By **Israel H. Weisfeld**. Prentice-Hall, \$2.50. Here is a good idea that would have produced better results if Rabbi Weisfeld had asked a Protestant minister and a Catholic priest to cooperate with him in the production of this book. Its more than 400 stories, anecdotes and jokes on religious and denominational themes provide many that are usable in the minister's speaking outside of the pulpit. Unfortunately some are in bad taste and even offensive. Too many others have whiskers.

THE INSPIRATION OF IDEALS. By **George W. Truett**. Compiled and edited by **Powhatan W. James**. Eerdmans (Grand Rapids, Mich.), \$2.50. This fifth volume in the reprint series memorializing the great Texas Baptist pulpiteer contains ten addresses delivered on special occasions. Still good reading even if somewhat dated. Particularly valuable to the present crop of Southern Baptist preachers.

GARLAND EVANS HOPKINS.

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

			An analysis based on reports from leading religious book sellers and from the reading of <i>The Pulpit's</i> distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers	
January	February	This Month		
2	2	1	Life of Jesus.	Edgar J. Goodspeed. Harper, \$3.00
5	9	2	American Freedom and Catholic Power.	Paul Blanshard. Beacon Press, \$3.50
1	1	3	Here I Stand.	Roland H. Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$4.75
		4	So We Believe, So We Pray.	George A. Buttrick. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.75
	7	5	A Mighty Fortress.	Ernest F. Tittle. Harper, \$2.50
3	3	6	Mr. Jones Meet the Master.	Peter Marshall. Revell, \$2.50
		7	Building Up Your Congregation.	Willard A. Pleuphner. Wilcox & Follett, \$2.50
		8	What Are You Living For?	John S. Bonnell. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.00
		9	The Man of Sorrows.	Albert T. W. Steinhäuser. Augsburg, \$2.50
		10	The Belief in Progress.	John Baillie. Scribners, \$2.75

Who is the Student-Preacher of the Year?

THE PULPIT

has invited every student now preparing for the ministry in a Theological Seminary to submit a sermon for consideration as the sermon of the year. Only students in a Participating Seminary* are eligible.

The first award will be \$100 in cash and an all-expense trip to Chicago where the sermon of the year will be preached at the famous Sunday Evening Club on May 27, 1951. The second award will be \$50 in cash, and the third award will be \$25 in cash. There will also be seven Honorable Mention awards.

This first annual selection of the Seminarian Preacher of the Year has met with enthusiastic

approval on the part of the leading seminaries of the country. Among those who have already expressed a desire to participate in the award and who have appointed faculty committees to consider candidates from their schools are: Chicago Theological Seminary (A. C. McGiffert, Pres.), Harvard Divinity School, (Willard L. Sperry, Dean), School of Religion, Butler University (O. L. Shelton, Dean), Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (A. D. Kelley, Dean), School of Religion, University of Southern California (Earl Cranston, Dean), Meadville Theological School, Chicago (Wallace W. Robbins, Pres.), and many, many others. Acceptances are being received daily.

The final selection will be made by a committee consisting of the following:

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Bishop of the Methodist Church

BRADSHAW MINTENER,

*Vice-President, Pillsbury Mills,
and prominent Methodist layman*

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Kansas City, Mo.*

ALTON M. MOTTER,

*Director, The Chicago Sunday
Evening Club*

GARLAND EVANS HOPKINS,

Managing Editor, The Pulpit

Seminaries desiring to participate in accordance with the rules of the selection are urged to register before the deadline, March 15, 1951. Every student in every seminary should have an opportunity to win the major award!

*A participating theological seminary is one which notifies The Pulpit in writing not later than March 15, 1951, that, by official action of the faculty, the seminary desires to participate in the selection and agrees to the following rules:

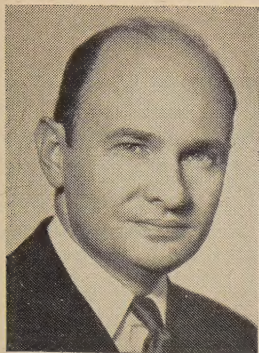
- (a) Each participating seminary will appoint a local committee of judges, composed of not less than three (3) members, who shall carefully consider all candidates for the selection.
- (b) Candidates shall be judged on the following bases: content and construction of sermon submitted, 60 percent; delivery and pulpit poise, 30 percent; personableness of the candidate, 10 percent.
- (c) All sermons must be original and not previously published.
- (d) The local committee of judges will nominate to The Pulpit not later than April 1, 1951, the names of not more than three (3) eligible candidates for the selection together with the sermon submitted by each of the candidates, in duplicate typewritten copies, and a statement of not more than 200 words describing each candidate's delivery, pulpit poise and personableness. All nominations shall be addressed to The Board of Judges, c/o The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. All manuscripts submitted become the property of The Pulpit. None will be returned.

Any inquiries concerning the selection should be addressed to

THE PULPIT

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Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

On Worshiping God

A GOOD many people think that worship is the central function of the church. Certainly a generous share of the pastor's time and a large proportion of the church budget are spent to sustain the Sunday morning service. To this corporate experience are brought, not only the pastor's own preparation for sermon, prayers and other liturgical items and ceremonial acts, but also the preparation of the organist, the choral music of the choristers, the careful work of the ushers, the maintenance of nave and chancel by custodian and trustees and, of course, the presence of the people themselves, many of whom have come because of personal invitations by interested members.

An experience involving so many different persons and so many varied skills is necessarily complex. That is why the order and conduct of the service are often faulty. Nevertheless, we ought to order the service as carefully as possible and bring to it the best gifts of minister and people.

The sermon, which is a particular aspect of the service, implied by the title "The Pulpit," has a liturgical and ceremonial setting for its delivery. It does not exist and cannot be effective in splendid isolation. Its effectiveness is increased or marred by the service which accompanies it. Indeed many of us believe that the sermon is an integral part of the liturgy itself. Therefore it is reasonable to consider the sermon in relationship to the service.

During the course of the coming months, many aspects of divine worship will be considered in this column. These matters will range all the way from a consideration of the setting for worship to the structure of the service, the action or ceremonial of the minister, and the technical matter of writing prayers, litanies and other acts of worship. If you have questions or topics that you would like to see discussed, the author will be glad to have your suggestions.

There are three fundamental aspects to divine worship that a pastor must consider. Worship is first of all an attitude of his own. If the service is going to be charged with the reality of God's presence, the pastor must himself have the attitude of worship. This springs from his own mental attitude and his own personal devotional life. If God is an academic mat-

ter, then the service is likely to be academic in its accent. If the pastor does not know God at all because he is confident that the human mind can shoulder the burden of existence, then the service will be humanistic in its emphasis and devoid of any sense of God's presence.

It is surprising that, even in the evangelical Christian churches, many a minister fails to develop an attitude of worship. The tremendous mystery and power of God and the amazing loving-kindness of the divine Father that evermore shines in the face of Jesus Christ, never drives him to his knees in profound adoration. He indicates this fact by what he does during the service. When a pastor moves around the chancel, whispering to the visiting bishop or to the ushers or other assorted persons, he has forgotten that the Lord is in his holy temple. His whole being has failed to come alive to that wonderful point where God and man meet in deeply moving fellowship.

The second aspect of worship is its basic philosophy. Does divine worship make sense? The pastor must settle that problem for himself and his people. Worship has a theological basis. Only when that philosophy includes the presence of a living and personal God can you entertain the idea of divine worship. If that philosophy is humanistic, those exercises that you call worship are not really worship at all but spiritual exercises. Worship always has an objective reference and that reference is the living God. All the acts of divine worship proceed from a recognition of that point of reference. Adoration and thanksgiving, petition and intercession, illumination and dedication are all possible because the worshiper believes in God. As worshipers, we do not perform these various acts because they are customary, or interesting, or edifying. We fulfill these patterns because they reasonably emerge out of our philosophy of worship.

The third aspect of worship is the artistry involved. Divine worship is a fine art in its subjective expression. The writing and oral interpretation of hymns, prayers, anthems, litanies, sermons, and all the actions used to accent them further, form the complex that we call the art of worship. It is this rich complex of artistry that will be this column's particular concern.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

NINE DENOMINATIONS which "recognize one another's ministries and sacraments" have now produced a concrete plan for coming together in a united church. The plan was wrought out during more than a year's deliberation by the officially appointed representatives of the following churches: Methodist, Presbyterian, U.S.A., Presbyterian, U.S., Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical and Reformed, African M. E. Zion, Colored Methodist, and the Council of Community Churches. The total membership of these denominations is about 16 million—more than 35 per cent of American Protestants. At Cincinnati, January 23-24, the plan of union was presented for discussion and amendment to a convocation of the members of the commissions on inter-church relations of the above denominations (about 75 church leaders). The convocation received it with hearty appreciation, offered numerous suggestions for its amendment and asked the official Conference on Church Union to review its work in the light of these suggestions. The plan in its unfinished form was released to the public and to the churches in the hope that its general discussion would also bring out constructive and helpful suggestions. (The plan appeared in full in the *Christian Century* of February 14.) In my judgment, this is the most significant and promising undertaking in the half-century's history of the ecumenical movement. Those bodies where differences do not justify their continued separation may now seriously confront the possibility of becoming a united church.

A Concrete Plan For Church Union

The Book of the Month

ON THIS ROCK, AN APPEAL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY,
by G. Bromley Oxnam. Harpers, \$1.50.

THIS LITTLE BOOK consists of four lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in November 1949 on the William Henry Hoover Lectureship on Christian Unity. It came out just at the moment when the plan for union (described above) was being discussed at Cincinnati. At several points, Bishop Oxnam seems prophetically to anticipate that event. His pages are vibrant with deep yearning and "impatience" for action. He maintains that church union can be "more easily achieved" than is generally assumed. In four and a half pages he quotes the full text of the church union portion of the Bishops' Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1948, signed by all the bishops, the initial draft having been written by Bishop Oxnam himself. Following

are some extracts: "The churches must become the church. We believe our laity and our clergy desire union. We believe our Lord is calling upon us to unite. . . . When six or eight or ten denominations have taken such action . . . let their representatives meet and . . . draft a plan of union." "The union of American Christianity would electrify the world and accelerate the trends toward union on every continent. We [Methodists] speak with the authority of experience . . . in a united church which validates faith in the larger union. Our people are weary of discussion that has seemed to be a defense of our denominational ways, rather than a discovery of His divine way." The strong position taken by Bishop Oxnam and the Methodist Church, symbolized also by Bishop Holt's presidency of the Conference on Church Union, inspires confidence in the realism of the present undertaking.

A Thought for the Month

I WISH to voice what the Quakers call a "concern" about the drift among our ministers and in our theological seminaries toward the practice of psychoanalysis by the minister as a technique in pastoral counseling. That psychiatry has some

value in its own place, I am not prepared to deny, though the therapeutic theory on which it operates is open to serious skepticism.

The assumption that mental illnesses can be cured by digging into what its votaries weirdly call the "unconscious mind" and bringing to light some long forgotten conflict or misadventure which is then identified as the "cause" of the mental disturbance, lends itself too easily to a form of hypnotic quackery with which the Christian minister should not wish to be associated. I recently attended a minister's convocation whose five-day program was heavily loaded with this sort of psychologism, including the attempt to equate it with the Christian faith. It was disturbing to note with what uncritical eagerness the pastors and seminary students seemed to lap it up. Numerous churches have been led into this aberration by pastors who have yielded to its fascination as, in effect, the equivalent of, if not a substitute for, the Christian gospel. The characteristic temper of these churches borders on an orgy of subjectivism which, I can hardly doubt, produces more psychotic cases than it cures. This whole drift in Protestantism is in my judgment, a sign of decadence, the last stand of that older liberalism which elsewhere is giving way to a revitalized conviction of the wholesome objectivity of evangelical faith.

G. Bromley Oxnam

JUST what changes have been made in The Pulpit's policy in selecting sermons as a result of the recent reorganization of the journal?

So far as the basis for our selections is concerned, no change has taken place. We still try to select sermons that are representative of the best in preaching throughout the English-speaking world, plus an occasional translation of representative sermons from other languages. Actually, however, the competition for a place in The Pulpit has tightened considerably. There are two reasons for this. First, more preachers are submitting sermons. Second, each editorial associate will write one sermon a year for us. Since there is only space for some 65 sermons a year, this means that about half of the sermons printed will be written by editorial associates. On the basis of present submissions, during 1951 we will receive between 3,500 and 4,000 manuscripts from which to select about 35 sermons; or about one out of every hundred submitted will be printed.

Incidentally, sermons submitted by editorial associates go through the same critical reading as do all others we receive. In other words, we do not take it for granted that because a preacher has been selected as outstanding, every sermon he writes is necessarily outstanding. Too many publishers have been making that mistake for too long for us to have any illusions about the fact that name preachers sometime fail to score bull's eyes.

One out of a hundred! What a long chance, you say, that my sermon will be selected. Quite so, and the faint-hearted will probably think twice before sending us sermons. Well and good. There is little likelihood that sermons by the fainthearted would be selected anyway. These are not good days for Pastor Milquetoast. But these are days when any man with a message should do his utmost to make it heard. Every Sunday throughout the world the messages The Pulpit prints are re-echoed in hundreds of pulpits. If you have a helpful word, you should share it. Where better than through the columns of The Pulpit?

What happens once a sermon is selected as of Pulpit caliber? First, the preacher is notified and he is asked for a biographical sketch and a glossy photograph. (Dear, dear brethren: please, not the one you used in the seminary annual!) Second, the sermon is tentatively scheduled for publication within the next twelve months. That does not mean that it will get printed in the month it is originally scheduled to appear. Especially timely sermons (which may be timeless as well; the terms are not mutually exclusive) may come in which the editors feels must be printed immediately. It does mean that the accepted sermon will eventually get printed. G. E. H.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE EDITOR'S PAGE 30

SERMONS

The Triumph of Trust, by Johnstone G. Patrick 5
Little Linda's Friends, by C. W. Vandenberg 7
A Stone's Throw Removed, by Allen R. Huband 8
The Pre-eminent Christ, by Bernard H. Hemmester 10
The Cross and Life Eternal, by Charles R. Woodson 12
The Archer and the Trumpeter, by Helen Toner 14
Special Reason for Rejoicing, by H. B. Hudnut 15

ARTICLES

The Deeper Meaning of the Resurrection, by J. Claude Evans 2
No More 'Great Preachers,' by John R. Scotford 20

FEATURES

Enslin 22	Pulpit Post 17
Emurian 26	Sermon Summaries ... 18
Books 27	Hymns for Today 19
Seidenspinner 29	Pulpit Paragraphs 24
Titles and Texts 3	Pulpit Calendar 24
Prayer 16	For the Record 31

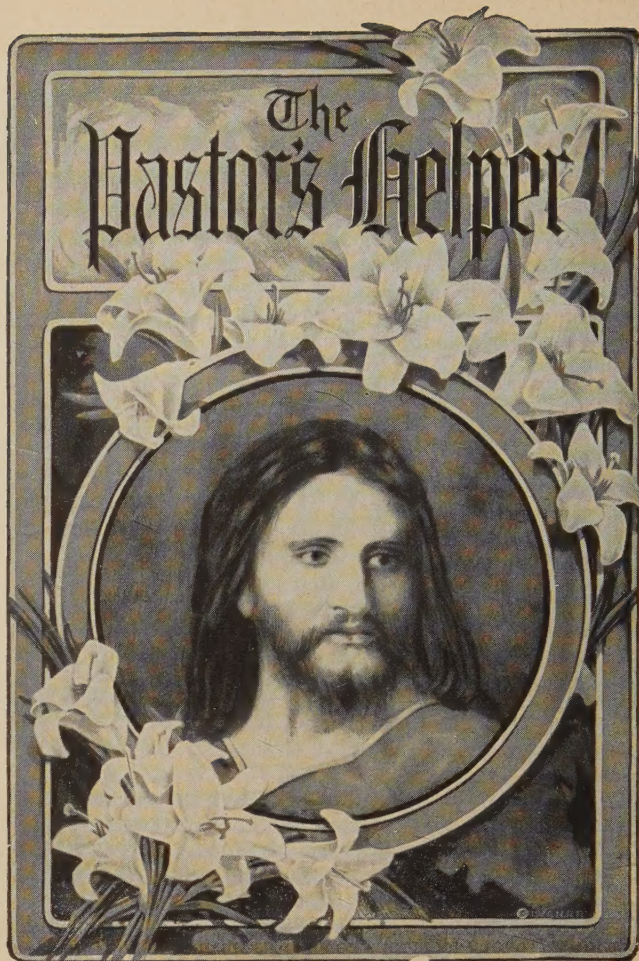
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